

**A DIFFERENT KIND OF SLAVERY:
AMERICAN CAPTIVES IN BARBARY, 1776-1830**

by

Christine E. Sears

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

Spring 2007

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

Spring 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Peter Kolchin, who introduced me to comparative slavery, go my deepest thanks. He gently nudged me through this process with unfailing kindness and a sense of humor. His reflective and insightful comments encouraged me to query more deeply and refine my thoughts and expression of them. He has generously given his time and support throughout the many years I have worked on this project. Both Peter and Anne Boylan have been sources of inspiration and counsel during my years in the program.

Owen White and Cathy Matson offered critical guidance on teaching, researching, and writing. I appreciated Gillian Weiss' comments and critiques as well as her astute observations about the profession. I am particularly grateful for informative conversations with Rudi Matthee. Many faculty members have mentored me during this process, but a special thanks to Carole Haber for her willingness to help even on a Sunday.

An Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship allowed research at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, while a Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Fellowship made possible archival work in their excellent collection, as well as the New York Public Library and the Library of the New-York Historical Society. A Colonial Dames of America District 10 Award in American History supported a semester of writing.

I am deeply indebted to John Davies not only for seemingly constant advice on revising, editing, and many other matters, but also for his friendship. Thank you to Tricia Davies for providing perspective and support, and Maggie Davies and Tamsyn Henke for smiles. I am profoundly grateful to Katie Leonard Turner, Lyn Causey, Alan Meyer, Jalynn Padilla, Deborah Kreiser-Francis, Rick Demirjian, and Kathy Anselmo-Henke for their feedback, advice, encouragement, and the occasional road trip. Glenn and Kathy Henke deserve special mention as consummate hosts and pirate hat providers.

I would like to thank members of Peter's dissertation group who edited and commented on many incarnations of this work. These colleagues and friends include Jeff Forret, Tim Hack, Jen Moses, Tracey Birdwell, Lyn Causey, John Davies, and Karen Ryder. *In vino veritas*. A special thanks to Pat Orendorf for her thoughtful and efficient assistance in all things. She made things easier and more pleasant from start to finish.

Many thanks to Gunter Schaffer for being sympathetic to the plight of a graduate student.

I am eternally grateful for the loving foundation provided by my parents, as well as the Oswalts and Anita Bellmore. I am inexpressibly thankful to my husband and partner Eric Brittingham for the many, many ways he has sustained me.

This manuscript is dedicated to E.B.

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ABSTRACT

Historians have used Barbary captivity largely to discuss early American diplomatic and commercial relations, the United States Navy's birth, or the formation of an American identity. Instead, I analyze the North African slavery suffered by hundreds of American between 1776 and 1830 in terms of their enslavement, thus situating my work as a study of slavery.

In order to describe the North African enslavement of Americans, I consulted government documents including naval documents, consular instructions and reports, and treasury records; commercial records; and slaves' papers including journals, published narratives, and personal papers. I also referred to European—primarily British—narratives, letters, and consular records to corroborate and correct American sources and provide a better understanding of Westerners' enslavement in North Africa.

In this dissertation, I seek to understand the experiences of Americans enslaved in North Africa, and how their enslavement compared to that of African Americans in North America. Enslaved Americans encountered diverse conditions as Barbary slaves, depending on how they were captured, by whom, and what type of labor they performed while enslaved. Shipwrecked sailors were held in rural settings by pastoralists in northwest Africa and often did little work, while those captured at sea were held in an urban, cosmopolitan setting and generally labored from sunup to sundown.

I use a broadly comparative framework to comprehend the nature of Western enslavement in North Africa. While analyzing enslaved Americans' experiences in North Africa, I confront how radically different this slavery was from the more familiar plantation slavery of the nineteenth-century American South. Those enslaved in Barbary might serve in elite, official positions, own taverns and even ships. This seemingly contradicts our understanding of what a slave is and what enslavement means. To understand this "peculiar institution," I compare Western slavery in north and northwest Africa to American and Mediterranean systems of slavery. This approach highlights what was specific to this slavery and considers the flexibility of slavery as an institution.

Introduction

“TENDER MERCIES”¹

In his 1798 narrative, John Foss implored his countrymen not to forget “the hardships—the sufferings—the agonizing tortures, which our fellow-citizens had to endure while groaning under all the horror of Mahometan vassalage.”² Foss spoke from personal experience: seized by Algerian corsairs in 1793, he was enslaved in Algiers until 1796. Few have heeded his call. Instead of remembering the sufferings of those enslaved, most Americans and historians have largely recalled the diplomatic and military maneuverings surrounding Foss’ enslavement. I examine “the horror of Mahometan vassalage” that Foss and others suffered between 1776 and 1830.

North Africans captured Europeans for hundreds of years, but Americans entered the Mediterranean without British protections only in 1776. Between 1785 and 1796, Algerian corsairs seized thirteen American ships and enslaved the crews aboard. These 140 men represented a small proportion of the almost 700 American men enslaved by the Barbary States of Tunis, Tripoli, and Morocco between 1776 and 1830. Men seized at

¹ William Shaler to Jonathon Russell, U.S. Consul in Stockholm, Algiers, 26 September 1815, Shaler Family Papers, 1797-1903, Folder Correspondence 1815-1818, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

² John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), Preface.

sea by North African corsairs were enslaved in urban centers until the United States negotiated for their ransom. Those who wrecked in the Western Sahara depended on their desert masters to redeem them in the port city of Mogador. In order to understand their experiences of slavery, I include those who, like Foss, were captured by Algerian corsairs, as well as Americans who were enslaved after wrecking on the northwest coast of Africa. I put these North African slave systems in a broader, comparative perspective, a strategy that will “enrich our understanding” of Western slavery in north and northwest Africa and “facilitate... generalizations about slavery as a whole.”³

The State of the Field

Most historians have used the enslavement of Americans in north and northwest Africa to explain the growth of American diplomacy, creation of the navy, or development of an American identity. Many of these political, diplomatic, or military works took a celebratory tack arguing that Americans created an invincible navy manned by righteously angered citizens who halted the Barbary States’ piratical ways without the help of decadent Europeans who could not, or would not, do so. Both classic works in this area, Ray W. Irwin’s 1970 *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers, 1776-1816* and Henry G. Barnby’s 1966 *The Prisoners of Algiers*,

³ Peter Kolchin, “Some Recent Works on Slavery Outside the United States: An American Perspective. A Review Article,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 4 (October 1986): 777.

conform to this pattern. Like other works in this field, both used a narrative rather than an analytical approach to delineate how Americans broke Barbary's back.⁴

Some recent scholarship offered a more balanced view of Americans' involvement in North Africa while sharing the political, diplomatic, and military focus of earlier volumes. Michael L.S. Kitzen, for instance, presented a nuanced interpretation of North African-American encounters, though he argued that U.S.-North African relations

⁴ Historians celebrating Americans' success against the Barbary states include A.B.C. Whipple, *To the Shores of Tripoli: The Birth of the U.S. Navy and Marines* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991); Stephen Howarth, *To Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1991* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1991); Donald Barr Chidsey, *The Wars in Barbary: Arab Piracy and the Birth of the United States Navy* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1971); Glenn Tucker, *Dawn Like Thunder: The Barbary Wars and the Birth of the United States Navy* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963). Among the most recent examples of this approach are Frederick C. Leiner, *The End of Barbary Terror: America's War against the Pirates of North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Richard Zacks, *The Pirate Coast: Thomas Jefferson, the First Marines, and the Secret Mission of 1805* (New York: Hyperion, 2005); and Frank Lambert, *The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005); Ray W. Irwin, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers, 1776-1816* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1931, 1970); Henry G. Barnby, *Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War, 1785-1797* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). Gary Wilson's dissertation shared this narrative and military-diplomatic approach with Irwin and Barnby. Gary Edward Wilson, "American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations, 1784-1816" (Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State University, 1979). Historians emphasizing a political slant discussed when and who decided to take actions against North Africa and what was done. James A. Carr, "John Adams and the Barbary Problem: The Myth and the Record," *American Neptune* 26, no. 4 (1966): 231-257; David A. Carson, "Jefferson, Congress, and the Question of Leadership in the Tripolitan War," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 94, no. 4 (October 1986): 409-424; James R. Sofka, "The Jeffersonian Idea of National Security: Commerce, the Atlantic Balance of Power, and the Barbary War, 1786-1805," *Diplomatic History* 21, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 519-524; R. Blake Dunnivant, "Corsairs and Commodores: The U.S. Navy's Mission and European Influence during the Tripolitan War," *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1850*, Selected Papers 1996 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1996), 161-166; Michael Kitzen, "Money Bags or Cannon Balls: the Origins of the Tripolitan War, 1795-1801," *Journal of the Early Republic* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 601-624.

were significant because they fostered the birth of the U.S. navy and marines.⁵ Former ambassador Richard B. Parker offered an even-handed look at U.S.-North African diplomatic interactions based, in part, on the few Arabic and North African sources available. His skillfully crafted book provides a needed corrective, yet it adheres to the same focus and format as those previous works.⁶

Other authors have shown how North African captivity shaped Americans' national and self conceptions. In *The Crescent Obscured*, Robert J. Allison traced public reactions to North African captivity and explored how Americans used literary portrayals of dissolute Turks to highlight their own republican virtue. Though based on little factual information, American stereotypes of Muslims provide an American discourse in which the "Muslim world" supplied a "lesson for Americans in what not to do." They should avoid decadence, luxury, and tyranny or risk degenerating to the North African's level.

⁵ Michael L.S. Kitzen, *Tripoli and the United States at War: A History of American Relations with the Barbary States, 1785-1805* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 1993). Alexander T. Jennette argued that clashes between American consuls and commodores caused military and diplomatic failures during the Tripolitan War. Alexander T. Jennette, "Consuls and Commodores: The Initial, Unsuccessful Campaign Against the Barbary Pirates, 1801-1803" (Master's thesis, East Carolina University, 1985). See also Patrick Joseph Gibbons, "Corsairs, Privateers, and Pirates: A Reconsideration of the Barbary Wars, c. 1780-1805" (Senior thesis, University of Virginia, 1992); and Martha Elena Rojas, "'Insults Unpunished': Barbary Captives, American Slaves, and the Negotiations of Liberty," *Early American Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 159-186.

⁶ Importantly, Parker pointed out that the U.S.-Barbary relations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries bear no similarity to modern events like 9/11 and terrorism today. For those who insist on using historical precedents for justifying current choices, he firmly stated that "it was diplomacy, not force" that "resolved...our crisis with the Barbary states." Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), xv.

In his cultural history, Allison analyzed the “challenge North African slavery posed to American culture.” Though most Americans conflated republicanism with slavery, Allison contended that Americans were haunted by the “unresolved dilemma of slavery” at home, which served as a “constant reproach to their own sense of moral superiority.”⁷

More recently, Joanne Pope Melish described how Algerian enslavement of Americans contributed to early national racial theories. At the same time that Northern slaves were gradually emancipated, Americans increasingly portrayed blacks as inherently inferior to “proud and virtuous whiteness.” Americans surviving North African enslavement returned psychologically unmarred, which confirmed for white Americans their naturally superior qualities. Lawrence A. Peskin believed the Algerian crisis influenced how “Americans came to understand what it meant to be an independent

⁷ Allison disclosed that he was in Iran “when a revolution broke out” in 1978. This influenced his interest in American encounters with the Muslim world. Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*, xiv, xvii-xviii; Doron Ben-Atar, review of *The Crescent Obscured*, *William and Mary Quarterly* 52., no. 2 (April 1996): 419-420. See also Gary E. Wilson, “The American Hostages in Muslim Nations, 1784-1796: The Public Response,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 2, no. 2 (1982): 123-141. Other scholars examined American literary works, including captivity narratives, to highlight aspects of American culture. These include Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790-1890* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998); Osman Bencherif, *The Image of Algeria in Anglo-American Writings, 1785-1962* (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1997); Paul Baepler, “The Barbary Captivity Narrative in Early America,” *Early American Literature* 39 (1995): 95-120; James R. Lewis, “Savages of the Sea: Barbary Captivity Tales and Images of Muslims in the Early Republic,” *Journal of American Culture* 13 (Summer 1990): 75-84; Marwan M. Obeidat, “Two Lost American Plays: Ideas of the Muslim Barbary Orient,” *The Maghreb Review* 13, no. 3-4 (1988): 191-198; Marwan M. Obeidat, “Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive* and the Barbary Orient: An Example of America’s Early Literary Awareness of the Muslim Near East,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 5, no. 2 (1988): 255-261; Hester Blum, “Piratical Tars, Piratical Texts: Barbary Captivity and American Sea Narratives,” *Early American Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 133-158.

nation.” While not as celebratory as other authors—for him, the Algerian crisis forced a “sense of national impotence” on Americans—he, like Irwin, Barnby and others, traced the political discourse and diplomatic interactions related to freeing enslaved Americans in Algiers.⁸

Instead of providing a diplomatic, military, or cultural history, I situate the enslavement of Americans in north and northwest Africa as a history of slavery. Previous historians who have done so referred to huge, sweeping chunks of time and meshed all the Barbary States together even though slavery in North Africa varied considerably depending on the exact location and the precise time period one considers. When Stephen Clissold described the capture, enslavement and redemption of Westerners in North Africa, for example, he covered all the Barbary States from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, but made very few distinctions of time or place.⁹

⁸ Like others, Peskin found that “one direct result of the Algerian captures” was the birth of the navy. Joanne Pope Melish, “Emancipation and the Em-bodiment of ‘Race’: The Strange Case of White Negroes and the Algerine Slaves,” in Janet Moore Lindman and Michele Lise Tarter (eds.), *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 23; Lawrence A. Peskin, “The Lessons of Independence: How the Algerian Crisis Shaped Early American Identity,” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 3 (June 2004): 298.

⁹ Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (London: Elek Books, 1977). Focused studies on early modern Western enslavement in North Africa do exist. See, for example, Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). Robert C. Davis’ *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters* focused on a particular location and time period, but neglected the North African cultural context. Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003). For a critique of Davis’ work, see Ehud R. Toledano, “European Slaves in the Ottoman Empire,” review of *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, by Robert C. Davis, *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (March 2006): 140-142.

John W. Blassingame investigated the enslavement and acculturation of Americans in North Africa, and used his findings to illuminate the acculturation of African slaves in America. While I agree with Blassingame that the “key determinants” of slave acculturation were the “length of their servitude, parallels between their culture and that of their masters, the role of the masters’ governmental and religious leaders in protecting, training, and converting the slaves to their faith, and the treatment and labor of the bondsmen,” I believe he misread those conditions as they applied to Western slaves in Africa.¹⁰

In addition, Blassingame conflated time periods and locations. His work spanned Cervantes’ late sixteenth-century Algerian enslavement to James Riley’s nineteenth century Moroccan enslavement without acknowledging important changes and differences over time. For example, Westerners taken in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were enslaved longer than most taken in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Blassingame posited that “between 50 and 75 per cent of the Christian slaves converted to Islam, some with great rapidity” without indicating to which time period these numbers applied. They did not apply to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At that time, enslaved Westerners were rarely pressured to convert and few did so.¹¹ Though Blassingame differentiated between the experiences of those held in port

¹⁰ John W. Blassingame’s work aided in shifting slave history from the masters’ perspective to the slaves’ and in studying slaves as individuals with agency rather than objects who were merely acted upon. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 49.

¹¹ Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 59.

cities and those in the rural northwest, he overstated the “relative homogeneity of Arabic cultures” in North Africa, and, therefore, the effect of cultural homogeneity on slave acculturation.¹²

My work both widens and narrows the lens others have used to tackle enslaved Americans in north and northwest Africa. I analyze slavery of a particular time period, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in specific locations: Algiers and northwest Africa. My findings indicate that Blassingame and subsequent authors have over-emphasized the “cultural homogeneity” of northern Africans. Islamic culture and Muslim slavery were not, as portrayed by Blassingame, monolithic or unchanging. I hope this work will contribute to the growing body of literature demonstrating how slavery in Muslim lands varied.¹³

Lastly, Blassingame argued that Western slaves in Africa experienced “relatively mild treatment” due to “the abundance of food, the nature of West African slavery, and the infrequent contacts the blacks had with Caucasians.” This presentation of a kinder, gentler slavery obscured the actual conditions slaves encountered. Similarly, Allison contended that North Africans bestowed a temporary status on the “kinless strangers” they enslaved, thus giving outsiders a “place in society.” As I will show, neither Algerians nor northwestern Africans attempted to integrate Western slaves into their

¹² According to Blassingame, Westerners who resisted “islamization” were enslaved only a short period of time, but for those enslaved a long time, “within a few years of their capture, the world the white bondsmen had known began to recede from their minds, and the degradation of slavery forced them to adopt new behavioral patterns.” Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 51, 63.

¹³ Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 65.

society during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rather, both groups were more interested in redeeming their Western slaves than in keeping them in Africa.¹⁴

Remembering the “Horror of Mahometan Vassalage”

I seek to uncover and understand the experiences of Americans enslaved in north and northwest Africa between 1776 and 1830. Rather than looking at national diplomatic and military endeavors to free those enslaved, I “strive to understand what slavery meant” in this particular “historical and social environment.”¹⁵ I use a broadly comparative framework to comprehend the nature of this slave system. A comparative approach highlights what is specific to this form of slavery and considers the flexibility of slavery as an institution.¹⁶

¹⁴ According to Blassingame, Africans enslaved Westerners more out of curiosity than for their labor or redemption price. He briefly compared those shipwrecked in northwest Africa to those captured at sea and taken to Algiers. Those enslaved in Algiers, he argued, were treated more harshly, a conclusion derived from one source: Robert Adams’ narrative. Blassingame, *The Slave Community*, 51-52; Robert Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, An American Sailor, Who Was Wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa in the Year 1810* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, Sold by M. Carey and Son, 1817); Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*, 107-108.

¹⁵ Ehud Toledano, “The Concept of Slavery in Ottoman and Other Muslim Societies: Dichotomy or Continuum,” in Miura Toru and John Edwards Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 171 n. 20.

¹⁶ Peter Kolchin discussed the utility of a broadly comparative approach as a way to uncover the peculiarities of a slave system and the historical conditions that created it. Peter Kolchin, “The Comparative Approach to the Study of Slavery: Problems and Perspectives,” delivered at a conference on “Les Dépendances Serviles” (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, June 1996), 18-20; Peter Kolchin, “L’approche comparée de l’étude de l’esclavage, Problèmes et perspectives,” in Myriam Cottias, Alessandro Stella, and Bernard Vincent (eds.), *Esclavage et dépendances serviles: histoire comparée* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006), 284-301.

While enslaved in Africa, the nearly seven hundred Americans encountered varied conditions, none of which resembled the more-familiar plantation slavery associated with antebellum North America. In Africa, Americans' experiences depended on how they were captured, by whom they were captured, and what work they performed while enslaved. Most Americans enslaved in Africa were seized at sea, but a smaller number shipwrecked on the African coast and were subsequently enslaved. Shipwrecked sailors were held in rural settings by pastoralists, whereas those captured at sea were held in urban settings by settled city dwellers. Most shipwreck victims were privately owned, while corsair-captured Americans were state owned. Rural-held captives were detained singly or with one or two fellow slaves; urban captives joined hundreds of enslaved Europeans. All of these factors contributed not only to one's experience while enslaved, but also to one's access to redemption.

I explore what Americans did while enslaved, how they interacted with each other and with other nationalities, and how they interfaced with their masters and local populations. Did American captives forge bonds with one another in these alien surroundings? Did they build cross-cultural networks with other slaves? Create ties with their captors or others in their environment? Did they interact with the local economies? Did they resist their enslavement, and if so, how?

For this project, I consulted many different types of sources, including government documents, commercial records, and slaves' papers. In terms of government records, I incorporated naval correspondence and documents, consular instructions and reports, and treasury records. I culled information from insurance and commercial

records. These sources have been helpful in tracking enslaved Americans and their experiences, as well as providing contextual information about the societies in which Americans were enslaved and interactions between peoples of those societies and Americans.

Documents penned by slaves themselves have been most helpful. Enslaved Americans kept journals and corresponded with others, and several published narratives once freed. Since I focus on the slaves and their experiences, these sources were invaluable. They indicated how slaves felt and thought and what they experienced while enslaved, and, sometimes, when freed. They detailed how Westerners were captured and treated while enslaved. Slaves' stories included personal and cultural biases, and were often tailored to sell. Still, their narratives were not simply one-sided accounts of North African events, but "legitimate, if tricky, sources of information."¹⁷ Incorporating other sources, including European narratives, letters, and consular records not only provided some corroboration or corrective of slaves' stories, but also helped more fully describe the plight of Westerners in Africa. The inclusion of official correspondence and commercial documents aided in this, as well.

¹⁷ Linda Colley, "Going Native, Telling Tales: Captivity, Collaborations, and Empire," *Past and Present* 168, no. 1 (August 2000): 175-176.

“This World is full of Vicissitudes”¹⁸

Martha W. Routh felt sick every time another ship came near on her 1794 journey from England to Boston. When a French man-of-war was spotted, she anxiously recalled how many English ships the French had sunk, but a ship feared to be Algerian was even more threatening. Since the 1785 Portuguese peace with Algiers, corsairs ranged into the Atlantic where they occasionally threatened ships like Routh’s. Routh knew the Algerians enslaved those they captured. Worse, Routh understood that the Algerians “would never ransom Women at any price whatever.”¹⁹

Routh’s distress was not completely unfounded. Eighteenth-century seafaring was indisputably dangerous and uncertain. Even if corsairs did not strike, seafarers contended with disastrous storms that smashed their ships apart or thrust them ashore. Frequent newspaper accounts of ships lost at sea and other disasters fed Routh’s and others’ fears. In 1791, the *Boston Gazette* carried the “melancholy tidings” of a ferocious March storm that drove Salem’s *Harriet* and twenty-four other ships into Texel, an island off the Netherlands. The *Gazette* listed the names of the dead: out of twelve, only the

¹⁸ James L. Cathcart, Account of Captivity 1785, The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, D.C., 8; James Leander Cathcart, *The Captives* (LaPorte, Indiana: J.B. Newkirk, [1899]), 6.

¹⁹ Martha Winter Routh, Journal, 1794, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In fact, Algerians allowed the few Western women they captured during the eighteenth century to be ransomed. Women were more likely to have been captives in earlier periods when North Africans raided European coasts. Still, “relatively few Christian females ended up enslaved in Barbary—some estimates place their proportion as low as 5 percent.” Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 36, 170.

Captain survived. He lived only to see his ship and the other wrecks “plundered by the wicked and inhuman people of this place.”²⁰

Human predators pursued ships in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean from locations as diverse as the Barbary States, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Russia, France, and England. Routh, who traveled on an English ship, was ostensibly protected by treaties from North African corsairs, but they sometimes snatched ships and retained their prize, including the people on board, after excusing their seizure with pretexts. Though Barbary pirates threatened seafarers during many periods, they increased their activities between 1793 and 1802. From 1783 to 1792, Algerian corsairs seized sixty-seven ships, but they took 172 from 1793 to 1802.²¹ The Atlantic also swarmed with privateers, including North African corsairs that slipped past the Straits of Gibraltar in the late eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century, capture and enslavement were real possibilities “for anyone who traveled or lived near the Mediterranean.”²²

²⁰ “Storm drove ships into Texel on March 21st,” *Boston Gazette*, 11 July 1791. Newspapers regularly carried stories about wrecks and captures, and advertisements for ships with “a Mediterranean Pass.” In October 1785, Visenso Cranitick advertised a “complete Pass” to protect “from the Barbary Corsairs.” He was taking freight or passengers to “any port in Spain, Portugal, or the Mediterranean.” *The Independent Ledger and American Advertiser* (Boston), 10 October 1785.

²¹ Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800-1820*, translated by Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston: Brill, 2005), 75.

²² For Gonçal López Nadal, a general increase in mercantile traffic paired with improvements in North African firearms spurred an increase in North Africans’ privateering in the second half of the eighteenth century. Gonçal López Nadal, “Mediterranean Privateering between the Treaties of Utrecht and Paris, 1715-1856: First Reflections,” in David J. Starkey, E.S. Van Eyck Van Hselinga, J.A. De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers: New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 116. European

Routh's dread of corsairs was based not only on contemporary newspaper accounts and warnings, but also on hundreds of years' worth of stories, part of the "corsair hysteria" that "gripped much of Europe" in a "general panic fueled by a combination of fear and fantasy."²³ Barbary corsairs had terrorized Europeans for hundreds of years, swooping down on European ships and coastal towns. They enslaved their captives and transported them to North African urban centers where they were forcibly employed in a variety of trades and public works projects. Over the years, Europeans developed a negotiation system to ransom their countrymen, but many paid tribute or made diplomatic arrangements in an attempt to prevent their peoples' enslavement. New to the Mediterranean diplomatic game after declaring independence, Americans had not the means—or perhaps the desire—to pay tribute or ransom for their men.

The Algerians seized their first American victims in 1785. The *Rais*, or Captain, who captured the *Maria* comforted his new slaves by reminding them that "this world is full of vicissitudes." They had just exchanged freedom for slavery, but they could just as fast exchange their slavery for freedom, the *Rais* told them. This *rais* had first-hand experience with the Mediterranean world's vicissitudes. He had twice been enslaved, once in Spain and once in Genoa. Though he spent years in each location, he had

powers increased their privateering activities during these years, as well. French ships took 467 Danish ships between 1793 and 1802 while British privateers captured 156 Danish ships between 1799 and 1801. Ole Feldbaek, "Privateers, Piracy and Prosperity: Danish Shipping in War and Peace, 1750-1807," in Starkey, Van Hselinga, De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers*, 240; Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 9.

²³ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 5.

eventually been ransomed from each. He had, he said, been ill-treated while enslaved in Europe, and he assured the Americans that they would be treated better than he had been as a slave.²⁴

In Algiers, James L. Cathcart, a seaman on the *Maria*, met a second *rais*, Ibram *Rais*, also an Algerian who had personally experienced the Mediterranean world's volatility. He was less sanguine about those vicissitudes. Now old and sickly, Ibram was "generally supposed to be the most cruel, unrelenting guardian that had ever been in Algiers." Recently, he had returned from fourteen years of captivity in Malta, where he had been treated brutally; in retaliation, he viciously used Western slaves under his command whether they were Maltese or not.²⁵

The lives of both *rais* offered hints about enslavement in the Mediterranean world. First, capture at sea and subsequent enslavement was a very real possibility, and one that affected thousands of people, Muslim and Christian. Such enslavement was often temporary, but it might be years before redemption was arranged. For many,

²⁴ According to James L. Cathcart, the *Rais* said he had been used as a galley slave in Spain and Genoa. This seems suspect as galleys had largely disappeared in the Mediterranean in the early eighteenth century. Cathcart, *Captives*, 6; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 8; Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 39. For more on the use of galleys see Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, "Seapower in the Mediterranean from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century," in John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean* (Portland: Frank Cass, 2000), 32; Carla Rahn Phillips, "Navies and the Mediterranean in the Early Modern Period," in Hattendorf, *Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean*, 22.

²⁵ Cathcart tried to convince Ibram that Americans were not appropriate targets for his revenge. America, he argued, was thousands of miles away, and Americans did not hate Muslims like the Maltese. Only two Maltese seemed to be enslaved in Algiers at this time, both captured under a Portuguese flag. Cathcart, *Captives*, 45-48.

redemption never came; they served as slaves the remainder of their lives. Still, redemption and freedom from slavery was possible, a fact that distinguished Mediterranean slavery from North American slavery, which was life-long and hereditary.²⁶

Both *rais*' lives also illustrated the fact that in the Mediterranean, "infidels" or unbelievers were fair game for enslavement. Generally, Muslims enslaved Christians, and Christians enslaved Muslims. Several "Christian" or Western states "had enormous slave cultures," including France, Spain, Tuscany, and Malta, all of which were "active in enslaving Muslims—and sometimes Protestants." European corsairs raided North African coasts, took Muslim ships at sea, and used their captives as slaves. "Captive-taking and slave-making," was "emphatically 'a Mediterranean...phenomenon,'" but "never exclusively a Muslim one."²⁷ Just as Christians like Routh dreaded Muslims,

²⁶ Davis estimated that Europeans had a fifty-fifty chance of returning from North African captivity. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 170-173. Like Europeans, North Africans and Ottomans built systems to aid in freeing their enslaved brethren, including money donations for the redemption of their men. After the thirteenth century, no Islamic religious orders worked to free Muslim captives, and governments assisted only well-connected captives. Sometimes Muslim slaves were freed by diplomatic agreement between a Muslim and European country. Generally, however, Muslim "captives had to rely overwhelmingly on their own efforts." Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 23-25; (quotation) Eyal Ginio, "Piracy and Redemption in the Aegean Sea During the First Half of the Eighteenth Century," *Turcica* 33 (2001): 143; Pál Fodor, "Piracy, Ransom Slavery and Trade: French Participation in the Liberation of Ottoman Slaves from Malta During the 1620s," *Turcica* 33 (2001): 125-126.

²⁷ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 23, xxviii. For more on Western privateering in the early modern period, see Phillips, "Navies and the Mediterranean," and Molly Greene, "Beyond the Northern Invasion: The Mediterranean in the Seventeenth Century," *Past and Present* 174, no. 1 (February 2002): 52. Europeans often used North Africans the way North Africans used Westerners—as slave labor on public works. Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (New York: Random House, Inc.,

Christians, “especially the Maltese[,]continued to haunt the popular imagination of eighteenth century Ottomans.”²⁸

While the number of slaves held by Muslims or Christians varied over time, the overall scale of those enslaved was significant. In the mid to late seventeenth century, the French used about two thousand Ottoman subjects to power the Sun King’s galleys. Meanwhile, about four thousand French subjects toiled in North Africa. All told, at least fifteen thousand Spanish men and women were redeemed from seventeenth-century North Africa, while the Maltese, who “routinely preyed on Muslim vessels,” held about ten thousand Muslim slaves in 1720. As late as 1788, the Knights of Malta took seventy-eight North African ships, and in 1795, the Papal navy took eighty-eight. In 1789, the Moroccan sultan redeemed six hundred Muslims from Malta.²⁹

2002), 46; Abdallah Laroui, *A History of the Maghreb: An Interpretive Essay*, translated by Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 244; Salvatore Bono “Naval Exploits and Privateering” in Victor Mallia-Milanese (ed.) *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798: Studies on Early Modern Malta and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem* (Msida, Malta: Mireva Publications Ltd., 1993), 356; Robert Davis, “The Geography of Slaving in the Early Modern Mediterranean, 1500-1800,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 61. For Ottoman ships captured by Europeans see Nabil I. Matar, “The Last Moors: Maghāriba in Early Eighteenth Century Britain,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14, no. 1 (2003): 37-58.

²⁸ Eyal Ginio studied the process by which Muslims were redeemed from Christians. Ginio, “Piracy and Redemption in the Aegean Sea,” 136. For European piratical depredations in the Mediterranean, see Maurits H. van den Boogert, “Redress for Ottoman Victims of European Privateering: A Case against the Dutch in the *Divan-i Hümayun* (1708-1715),” *Turcica* 33 (2001): 91-118; Matar, “The Last Moors,” 37-28; Bono, “Naval Exploits,” 356. For Jewish victims of the Maltese Knights of St. John, see Moisés Orfali, “Ragusa and Ragusan Jews in the Effort to Ransom Captives,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 17, no. 2 (December 2002): 14-31.

²⁹ At the end of the seventeenth century, almost a quarter of Louis XIV’s 12,000 galley slaves were Ottoman subjects. Gillian Weiss, “Barbary Captivity and the French Idea of

Lastly, the *Rais* and *Ibram Rais* indicated the fluidity of Mediterranean cultures in which one's status might change suddenly and dramatically. One might go from sailor to slave in mere moments, and in the next moment, be freed and assume command of a ship or oversee slaves oneself as in Ibram's case. In the Mediterranean, lines between slave and free were not hard and fast nor were political and religious categories rigid. Rather, Mediterranean "boundaries were flexible and porous."³⁰

In fact, Mediterranean boundaries were so porous that describing a Holy War between Muslim and Christian does not really apply, particularly during the eighteenth

Freedom," *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 233; Colley, "Going Native," 45; Green, "Beyond the Northern Invasion," 67; Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 21, 23. Only 57 of the 600 were Moroccans, but the Moroccan sultan paid \$450 a head to ransom them. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 9. In the seventeenth century, "there were over fifty-five hundred Muslim captives in Venice and Malta alone." Matar, "Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity," 10.

³⁰ According to Pananti, *Rais* Hamida served the Portuguese when young, but returned to Algiers where he "cruised as far as Madeira and Newfoundland." Pananti also indicated that because the Secretary to the Marine visited many European ports, he spoke French and Italian fluently. Since he was also the leader of the Turkish military in Algiers, he presumably knew Turkish, as well. Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers...* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 43, 49; Eric Dursteler, "Identity and Coexistence in the Eastern Mediterranean, ca. 1600," *New Perspectives on Turkey* (Spring 1998): 114. At the end of the 1620s, there were "more Britons in North Africa than in North America." Nabil Matar, "Introduction: England and Mediterranean Captivity, 1577-1704," in Daniel J. Vitkus (ed.) *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 2. For eighteenth-century Moors working and living in England, see Matar, "Introduction," 37-38. On porousness in the Mediterranean, see Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 110-111. Privateers and pirates had difficulty discerning nationality in the Atlantic where crews were equally mixed. Dutch privateers were frequently manned by French and American captains and crews, for example. Jan van Zijverden, "The Risky Alternative: Dutch Privateering During the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, 1780-1783," in Starkey, Van Hselinga, De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers*, 194.

and nineteenth centuries. Historically, the Mediterranean was a “permeable frontier” for a mobile and diverse population, not a sea ringed by diametrically opposed religious forces. Though more common prior to the eighteenth century, renegades—Europeans who at least nominally converted and remained in Muslim polities—permeated this porous boundary. Many chose to stay in Africa from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. Some went “voluntarily, looking for a new life and taking up a new religion along the way;” some were captured and enslaved, and then chose to convert.³¹

A number of renegades resided with Muslims for the rest of their lives and had stunning careers that would not have been possible in their native countries. Gazanfer Aga from Venice was seized by corsairs in 1559; while his mother was freed, the boy was sent to Hungary where he caught the attention of Sultan Selim II and became an influential member of the Ottoman elite. Others eventually returned home and were re-integrated into European life. Captured by Algerians in 1724, fifteen-year-old Hark Olufs rose to a position of prominence as the Bey of Constantine’s slave; in 1735, when

³¹ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 2. According to Matar, seventeenth-century Englishmen “had to admit” that conversion to Islam “was as widespread as conversion to Christianity from Islam was rare.” N.I. Matar, “‘Turning Turk’: Conversion to Islam in English Renaissance Thought,” *Durham University Journal* 86, no. 1 (1994): 33. In the early eighteenth century, a Maltese *rais* operated out of Algiers, and later in the century Scottish sailor Peter Lyle terrorized Europeans as Murad of Tripoli. Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 62-63. Other regions had this cultural fluidity in the early modern period. See, for example, Dejanirah Silva Couto, “Some Observations on Portuguese Renegades in Asia in the Sixteenth Century,” in Anthony Disney and Emily Booth (eds.), *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 178-201.

the Bey was on his death bed, Olufs escaped to his homeland.³² As these two examples attest, political and religious boundaries were crossed, even multiple times, with relative ease in the Mediterranean.

As the stories of Olufs and Aga demonstrate, fixed religious categories were not the norm in the Mediterranean. Though often portrayed as a constant battleground where Muslim was pitted against Christian, the Mediterranean cannot be adequately described in binary religious terms. Shared religions did not necessarily protect one from attack by co-religionists in the Mediterranean: Christians fought Christians as frequently as Christians clashed with Muslims. Christians were divided by sect—Protestant, Catholic, Greek Orthodox—and these divisions were exacerbated by ties between religion and state formation in the early modern world.³³ Thus, the Protestant Dutch state sought Catholic, that is, French and Spanish, prey between 1570 and 1648 for economic as well as

³² Dursteler, “Identity and Coexistence,” 120-121. Constantine was a province of Algiers, and the provincial leader, or Bey, reported to the Dey of Algiers. Olufs’ family tried several times to redeem him, but was unsuccessful. Rheinheimer speculated that the Bey retained Olufs because he was so young, and therefore, recruitable, like boys taken in the *devshirme*. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, Ottoman officials levied boys from Christian families in the Balkans; the process of taking the boys was called the *devshirme*. Taken as youngsters, the boys were trained in military, literary, and administrative arts, and then assigned to bureaucratic or military posts in the Ottoman Empire. Martin Rheinheimer, “From Amrum to Algiers and Back: The Reintegration of a Renegade in the Eighteenth Century,” *Central European History* 36, no. 2 (2003): 209-233. For more about the place of renegades in the early modern world, see G.V. Scammell, “European Exiles, Outlaws, and the Maritime Economy of Asia, c. 1500-1750,” *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 4 (1992): 641-661.

³³ For Dursteler, the “most common cultural markers are language and religion.” Dursteler, “Identity and Coexistence,” 114; M. Shahid Alam, “Articulating Group Differences: A Variety of Autocentrism,” *Science & Society* 67, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 206. In the seventeenth century, religion “became a tool in support of commerce directed by and for the benefit of the state.” Greene, “Beyond the Northern Invasion,” 46.

political and religious reasons. The Dutch also used the confusion surrounding the War of Spanish Succession to seize Catholic French as well as Muslim North African ships.³⁴

Religion was not always connected to state. Though Greeks belonged to the Ottoman polity until Independence, most practiced Greek Orthodoxy. The Maltese Knights of St. John regularly preyed on their Greek co-religionists despite a Papal order decreeing that Greek Orthodox Christians were not legitimate prey. The Maltese classified Greeks by their political, not religious, affiliation, viewing them as Turkish subjects and, therefore, appropriate quarry. When captured by Maltese corsairs, Greeks stressed their shared Christianity instead of their status as Ottoman subjects.³⁵

North African corsairs pursued primarily, but not exclusively, Christian ships; they also preyed on each other, fellow Muslim or not. North African states did not always act in concert with fellow Muslims any more than Christians acted in unison. Despite their close political and religious ties to the Ottoman Empire, North African corsairs, like their Catholic counterparts ignoring the Pope's edicts, sometimes disregarded the Ottoman Sultan's *firmans*, or orders, dictating appropriate prey. For

³⁴ According to C.R. Pennell, there was never a "clean division between the 'Christian' north coast and the 'Muslim' south." C.R. Pennell, "The Geography of Piracy: Northern Morocco in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in C.R. Pennell (ed.), *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2001, 57; Kris E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (New York and London: Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 5, 62-95; van den Boogert, "Redress for Ottoman Victims," 116; Greene, "Beyond the Northern Invasion," 52.

³⁵ Greene, "Beyond the Northern Invasion," 59. Augustinos discussed connections between Greeks and the Greek Orthodox Church. See Gerasimos Augustinos, "'Enlightened' Christians and the 'Oriental' Churches: Protestant Missions to the Greeks in Asia Minor, 1820-1860," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4, no. 2 (1986): 129-142.

example, Tunisians attacked Venetian ships in the Aegean despite the Sultan's ban on doing so.³⁶

North Africans found Christian ships compelling prey because Muslims could legally enslave Christians. Islamic law dictated that infidels, or non-Muslims, were enslave-able while Muslims were ostensibly off limits as slaves. Infidels could be enslaved, however, only "after having been defeated in a lawfully constituted *jihad*."

North African Muslims used *jihad* as an expedient rhetoric. Seen in light of this rhetoric, Barbary corsairs claimed to represent the "naval arm of Islam engaged in an Eternal War with Christendom" while the Knights of Malta also warred to extinguish infidels. The

³⁶ Although Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers had been Ottoman provinces and maintained close ties to the Ottoman Porte, they operated as autonomous states by the late seventeenth century. By 1729, Algerians appointed their own leader, a dey, instead of accepting a pasha sent from Istanbul to rule them. Tal Shuval, "The Ottoman Algerian Elite and Its Ideology," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000): 334. For intra-Maghrebi disputes, see William Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of Corsairs*, The Centers of Civilization Series (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 118-122; Colley, *Captives*, 35; Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth Century Ibero-African Frontier*, Publication for the Center of Middle East Studies, no. 10 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978). Most Muslims practiced Sunni rather than Shi'ite Islam; this is true today, as well as in the past. Conflict between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims has generally been more contentious than among Shi'ites or Sunnis. There are four schools of Sunni jurisprudence, and those schools vary from one another considerably. Most Ottoman Muslims practiced Sunni rather than Shi'ite Islam, and most belonged to the Hanafi school, which is the largest today. Some North Africans followed the Hanafi school, but Maliki dominated in Algiers and Morocco. Algiers' courts used Maliki law for indigenous North Africans, but Hanafi interpretations were applied to Turks in the country. Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of Corsairs*, 91; Ahamed Alawad Sikainga, "Slavery and Muslim Jurisprudence in Morocco," in Suzanne Miers and Martin A. Klein (eds.), *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1999), 63; Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 17.

idea of a Holy War provided the “fiction” that “helped rationalize the Mediterranean traffic in slaves” on both sides, Muslim and Christian.³⁷

The Holy War rhetoric encouraged Muslims to refer to their slaves as “Christians” regardless of their denomination or whether or not a particular slave was a practicing Christian. Western slaves in Africa adopted the term “Christian” and frequently used it to describe themselves and each other. The label did not necessarily denote religious beliefs. Rather, it posed two groups, Muslim and Christian, absolutely opposed to and different from each other. Muslims and Christians used inaccurate religious perceptions and distinctions to express perceived difference between their civilizations for hundreds of years.³⁸

For Westerners, this short-hand terminology reminded them that they, as Christians, were connected by an uplifting, civilizing religion while their African masters were mired in an outmoded, superstitious religion that encouraged their savage ways.

³⁷ David J. Starkey, “Pirates and Markets” in Lewis R. Fisher (ed.), *Market for Seamen in the Age of Sail* (St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1994), 62; Colley, *Captives*, 58-59. Muslims did not always abide by established procedure for *jihad* or slave taking. For example, North African Muslims did enslave West Africans though “conversion to Islam had been an ongoing process” there for “seven centuries.” North African Muslims were, therefore, enslaving fellow Muslims. Specific rules govern a *jihad*. It had to be “conducted by the caliph...or his duly appointed regional governor” for the purpose of “elevation of the word of God” or expansion of Muslim government. John Hunwick, “Islamic Law and Polemics Over Race and Slavery,” in Shaun E. Marmon (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East* (Princeton: M. Wiener, 1999), 44-45; Ronald Segal, *Islam’s Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2001), 163-173; Weiss, “French Freedom,” 233.

³⁸ Instead of “Christian,” I use the term “Westerner” to distinguish the European and American slaves from their North African masters. A primarily geographic reference, “Westerner” is meant to emphasize the fact that this enslavement was not a religious crusade or *jihad*.

According to Archibald Robbins, Christianity promoted peace and taught “men to check the operations of passions, and depraved nature, and to become pure in heart” while Islam “promise[d] the full gratification of every propensity.”³⁹ For Noah Mordecai, Islam consisted of “ceremonies and superstitious rites” and was “founded on tyranny, an indulgence in sensualities, a sickening despotism—it gave full reign to passion, to revenge and intolerance.” Not surprisingly, noted Mordecai, the “Arabs readily adopted it.”⁴⁰

Despite the Holy War rhetoric, North African corsairs usually captured ships belonging to countries with which they did not have treaties, which indicated a “territorial, rather than a religious, definition of belonging.” Like religion, national affiliation was manipulated, so identifying the nationality of ships and individuals was fraught with difficulty. For this reason, Franco-Algerian treaties signed in 1619 and 1828 specified who was and was not a French subject. Still, in the “messy reality of the market place,” it was hard to “identify anything as clear-cut as ‘Muslim’ or ‘French’ or ‘Christian’ trade.”⁴¹ Because nationality was mutable, it could be ignored or misapplied

³⁹ Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut...* 3rd ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1818), 82.

⁴⁰ Noah Mordecai, *Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States in the Years 1813, 1814, and 1815* (New York: Kirk and Mercein, 1819), 296-297.

⁴¹ Neither Westerners nor North Africans were supposed to take ships belonging to countries with which they were at peace. Both did. French residence implied French nationality, but if captured while serving on a ship belonging to an Algerian enemy, the question of whether one was a legitimate prize was less clear. Frenchmen residing in the enemy’s country could be enslaved, but if he lived in France, he was not subject to enslavement. Van den Boogert, “Redress for Ottoman Victims,” 92; Greene, “Beyond Northern Invasion,” 62, 43. Islam was usually tolerant of other monotheistic religions,

when convenient. The Dutch and Ottomans, for example, agreed not to apprehend each other's ships, but the Dutch grabbed Ottoman ships under the "pretext" that they were "of North African, rather than Ottoman, origin."⁴²

Sometimes seamen claimed whatever nationality they thought most expedient at the time. To avoid Algerian capture, Captain McComb of the Massachusetts *Rambler* passed himself, his crew, and his ship off as British subjects hailing from Cork, Ireland.⁴³

including Christianity and Judaism. This tolerance allowed "close ties among" Christians, Jews, and Muslims, including business ties. Matar, "Turning Turk," 36; Ellen G. Friedman, "The Exercise of Religion by Spanish Captives in North Africa," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 6, no. 1 (April 1975): 32. Fernand Braudel argued that "privateering often had little to do with either country or faith, but was merely a means of making a living." Quoted in John L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," in Pennell, *Bandits at Sea*, 90.

⁴² Though a process of adjudication did exist, recovering a prize could be lengthy and costly. One Dutch captain went to extreme lengths to justify his prize. He tortured the Ottoman captain of a prize until that captain declared his North African origin. The captain and his crew were dispatched to the "*bagno* of Livorno." Van der Boogert, "Redress for Ottoman Victims," 94, 104-105. Livorno (Leghorn to the English) had an active slave market "scarcely less important than that of Algiers" where Christians sold captured Muslims. Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, 19; Paul Walden Bamford, "The Procurement of Oarsmen for French Galleys, 1660-1748," *American Historical Review* 65, no. 1 (October 1959): 33. Tripolitans captured and condemned two Swedish ships in 1799 by pretending they were Hamburgers. This was in retaliation for the loss of provisions shipped to Malta on a Swedish ship and lost to the Portuguese. Tripoli's Bashaw demanded Sweden reimburse him thirty-two thousand dollars. When Sweden ignored this request, Tripoli began seizing Swedish ships. In 1799, two Danish ships, 3 Swedish, 2 Imperials (Russian), and 1 Ragusian were in Tripoli under "various false pretenses." Cathcart to William Eaton, Tripoli, 22 June 1799 and Cathcart to Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State, Tripoli, 31 December 1799, in James L. Cathcart, *First War with the United States* (LaPorte, Indiana: Herald Print, 1901), 43, 52, 100.

⁴³ Peskin, "The Lessons of Independence," 297.

Not surprisingly, American officials had trouble identifying their own.⁴⁴ Noah Mordecai redeemed four men from the American ship *Edwin* though he suspected they were French because they spoke little English but fluently conversed in French; Noah conceded that French was spoken by citizens of Louisiana, so they might have been Americans.⁴⁵ Lt. Benjamin Smith returned Thomas Dixon to the British even though Dixon professed American citizenship. Born in Massachusetts but “pressed out” of an American ship three years prior, Dixon wanted to be free of British naval service. Smith, however, was “not confident of his being an American,” and did not want to harbor the “Deserters of another country.”⁴⁶ Because sailors had fooled him before, Consul William Jarvis made it a “rule to examine Seamen closely” before believing they were U.S. citizens.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Congress enacted An Act for the Relief and Protection of American Seamen in 1796. Under this act, a sailor who could prove American citizenship could purchase a Seaman’s Protection Certificate and was registered with the government as a citizen. Prior to 1796, sailors could apply to local notaries for similar certificates. Kelly S. Drake, “The Seaman’s Protection Certificate as Proof of American Citizenship for Black Sailors,” *The Log of Mystic Seaport* 50, no. 1 (1998): 11. Vast amounts of money were spent for the “Relief and Protection of American Seamen,” a fact that glancing at any United States Treasury accounts will illustrate. In 1827, The U.S. government expended \$30,617.68 on the Relief and Protection of American Seamen and \$26,505.54 on Treaties with Mediterranean Powers. The cost was \$27,831.85 in 1802 and \$71,730.69 in 1818. United States, House of Representatives, Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury Transmitting the Annual Report on the State of Finance for the Year 1828 (Washington: DeKrafft, 1828), 33; United States Treasurer, An Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of the United States for the Year 1802 (Washington: Published by the Order of the House, [1803]), 57-59; United States Treasury Department, An Account of the Receipts and Expenditures for the Year 1818 (Washington: De Krafft, 1819), 128-136.

⁴⁵ The men did not apply to the French consul; in this case, the Americans and French were at peace with Algiers, and regardless of which country they claimed, they could have been redeemed. Mordecai, *Travels in England, France*, 159.

⁴⁶ Lt. Benjamin Smith, U.S. Navy, to Captain John Rodgers, Harbor of Syracuse, 4 February 1806, in *Naval Documents*, vol. 6, 363. In 1813, “landman” Paul Naulette was

Ships sailing under one nation's flag often carried goods belonging to another nation. For Muslims, especially Ottoman subjects, this made good business sense as ships under Ottoman flags were forbidden in most European ports. Ottoman trade in Europe had to be carried by North African or European ships. In the eighteenth century, the French were major carriers of Ottoman goods though other countries also carried their cargoes.⁴⁸ In 1718, a Spanish ship snatched an English ship carting North African people and cargo. The English captain petitioned for the release of fourteen Algerians and their

captured by the British, but released "as a Frenchman, whom he personates." Henry Denison, "Account of Stores and Monies Advanced by Henry Denison to Sundry Officers and Seaman...Late Prisoners of War in Great Britain," in Rodgers Family Papers, Box 1, Folder Henry Dennison Pay Roll Receipts for Monies Paid to Prisons of War at Dartmoor, England, 1814-1815, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. In 1809, a British woman asked officials to help her locate her son. He shipped on a neutral ship going from Bristol to Lisbon, and was described as wearing "Earrings to pass for an American." In 1802, a British official reminded the British consul in Algiers that "British Subjects" did not "change their national character" when captured even if serving on an armed and foreign merchant ship. Castlereagh to Whitehall, Downing St., 23 May 1809, and Pelham to Whitehall, 10 September 1802, Public Records Office, Barbary States General Correspondence Before 1906, Barbary States 1801-1812, 571 FO 8/5.

⁴⁷ William Jarvis to James Madison, Lisbon, 26 November 1806, Despatches from United States Consuls in Tangier, 1797-1906, National Archives and Records Services Administration, College Park, Maryland.

⁴⁸ Thereby robbing the Maltese of Muslim prizes! Panzac argued that Ottoman merchants preferred Christian ships because Christian ships paid lower duties and were protected from Christian corsairs. According to Michel Fontenay, three-fourths of the ships going from Egypt to Turkey sailed under the French flag by 1776. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns*, 113; Daniel Panzac, "International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th Century," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 2 (May 1992): 193, 197; Michel Fontenay "The Mediterranean 1500-1800," in Mallia-Milanese, *Hospitaller Malta 1530-1798*, 100.

five black slaves.⁴⁹ Privateering was more about profit than religion, and certainly by the eighteenth century, profit, not religious warfare, usually dictated which ships would be captured in the Mediterranean.

Ships' crews often consisted of an ethnic and national mix of men. Owners of both the goods on board and the ship might also be multi-ethnic and multi-national. This further complicated the issue of which nationality a ship represented and, therefore, the legitimacy of the ship as a prize. For example, "English ships employed Spanish sailors and Italian and French ships used Genoese crews." Barbary captains and officials "found it difficult to believe that a ship flying the French flag but whose crew could not speak French was really French..."⁵⁰ Because crews and cargoes were mixed, privateers of all countries had difficulty discerning the national origin of ships and crews.

Because Barbary corsairs detained non-believers from Western states with which they were at war and did so with the license of their respective state, they were technically privateers and not pirates. Pirates operated "beyond the law," without the "authority of any recognized state," whereas privateers were "restricted to specific targets and subject to the due process of law."⁵¹ Privateers were usually privately owned ships

⁴⁹ Van den Boogert, "Redress for Ottoman Victims," 33, 91-118. By 1720, "so many" North Africans were "victims of British piracy" that they "became quite familiar on London streets," where they went to petition for redress. Matar, "The Last Moor," 40-41.

⁵⁰ Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns*, 111.

⁵¹ Contemporaries and historians have variously defined Barbary corsairs as pirates or privateers. In part, definitions differed depending on one's perspective, but the line between privateer and pirate was not always clear in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During this time, privateers and "quasi-privateers" operated uncontrolled by strong states. David J. Starkey, "Introduction," in Starkey, Van Hselinga

whose captains were commissioned by a state during wartime, and authorized, often with a letter of marque, to attack enemy ships. Their seizures were governed, at least loosely, by international agreements or practices that governed appropriate prizes and conditions under which they could be taken. However, countries interpreted and applied those agreements differently, and each country established courts to adjudicate the taking of prizes according to their various interpretations.⁵²

The Mediterranean continued to be an active and profitable commercial sphere in the eighteenth century. The British operated as many ships in the Mediterranean as they did in the Atlantic even at the end of the century. In fact, the Mediterranean “retained its strategic importance” in the “broader context of world trade and international rivalries.”⁵³ Those rivalries were played out violently in the Mediterranean and Atlantic. Increased

and De Moor, *Pirates and Privateers*, 1; Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates and Sovereigns*, 22, 44-45, and, Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 75.

⁵² American privateers were released during the Revolutionary War, though each state issued commissions and created prize courts to adjudicate disputed prizes. By the late eighteenth century, Algerian corsairs were government, not privately, owned. Still, through “usage[,] corsair has come to mean a privateer.” Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 57; (quotation) Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 6; Colley, *Captives*, 44-45. Snezhka Panova, “The Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers during the Eighteenth Century,” *Archiv Orientálná, Quarterly Journal of Asian and African Studies* 69, no. 2 (Praha, Czech Republic, 2001): 267; Robert C. Ritchie, “Government Measures against Piracy and Privateering in the Atlantic Area, 1750-1850,” in Starkey, Van Hselinga and De Moor, *Pirates and Privateers*, 21. For more on prize law and due process of law for privateers, see Faye Kert, “Cruising in Colonial Waters: The Organization of North American Privateering in the War of 1812,” in Starkey, Van Hselinga and De Moor, *Pirates and Privateers*, 145-146; and Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 6-8. For more on privateering laws and the long road to abolish privateering, see Thomas, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*, 24, 70, 70-76.

⁵³ Phillips, “Navies and the Mediterranean,” 3, 6, 8; Colley, *Captives*, 34-35.

maritime violence corresponded with the building of bigger ships and navies. In 1790, the French navy was 60% larger than it had been in 1775; the British navy was 40% larger, and the Spanish 30% larger. Violence marked eighteenth-century seaborne trade, and was particularly perpetrated by European maritime powers, whose naval build up gave them more and larger ships. However, North Africans also fortified their fleets in the 1780s and 1790s.⁵⁴

Enter Americans

Americans had little choice but to enter the violent fray in the Mediterranean for they had few other outlets for their goods after the Revolutionary War. As English subjects, Americans had been protected by the Anglo-Algerian treaty of 1682, which permitted English ships to ply the Mediterranean without interference. Once they won independence, Americans were fair game for North African corsairs, who wasted little time in capturing American ships and enslaving their crews. Americans, who had just fought a war to throw off the yoke of British “slavery,” found this practice abhorrent. Unlike the Spanish, French, and Italians, who had long “reciprocated in kind and

⁵⁴ Russians developed a naval force in the 1780s to fight the Turks in the Levant and Black Sea. Their navy was 130% larger in 1790 than it had been in 1773. European naval construction surpassed North African at this time, but Ottoman reforms of the 1790s and after focused on fostering the navy. In fact, the Ottoman navy was the fourth largest in the world in the early nineteenth century. Jeremy Black, *War in the World: Military Power and the Fate of Continents, 1450-2000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 148; Coutau-Bégarie, “Seapower in the Mediterranean,” 33-34; Jan Glete, “Warfare at Sea 1450-1815,” in Jeremy Black (ed.), *War in the Early Modern World, 1450-1815* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 47; Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 50, 52.

enslaved Muslims whenever they captured them,” Americans had little history with North Africans and did not try to capture and enslave them.⁵⁵

Americans wanted to trade freely, unhampered by such inconveniences as the Navigation Acts, but they found a hostile environment in which European governments defended mercantilist practices against the newcomers. In 1784, the British barred Americans from trading in the West Indies and Canada. The French permitted limited access to their Caribbean colonies after the war. Though the French opened additional ports in 1784 and 1785, they closed them again during the Quasi War between France and America (1798-1801). During these years, they closed all French ports to American ships. After the Jay Treaty, they rejected claims of American neutrality and seized American ships headed for England.⁵⁶

The Revolution also changed commercial arrangements with England and its colonies. The English blocked American trade in the West Indies, which had accounted for twenty to thirty-five percent of all colonial exports before the war.⁵⁷ Worse, American ships were no longer protected by British treaties or the formidable Royal

⁵⁵ Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, xiv.

⁵⁶ Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1980), 88-92; Michelle Craig McDonald, “The Chances of the Moment: Coffee and the New West Indies Commodities Trade,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (July 2005): 453, 458, 462.

⁵⁷ After the Revolutionary War, the British did not allow American ships to carry goods between the United States and the West Indies. In addition, goods carried to the United States were taxed as foreign exports after the war. McDonald, “Chances of the Moment,” 444-445, 448.

Navy. The danger of this situation became tangible in 1785 when the *Maria* and *Dauphin* were seized by Algiers and their crews enslaved.

With other trading avenues closed to them, Americans conducted a “brisk commerce” in the Mediterranean consisting of roughly one-sixth of Americans’ total flour and wheat exports, one-fourth of the dried and pickled fish, and one-fourth of rice exports. Americans identified Barbary’s seizure of their vessels as a threat to their just-won ability to control their country’s economic destiny. Indeed, by “closing the Mediterranean to the people’s entrepreneurial spirit,” the Barbary States “imposed a barrier” that limited Americans as effectively as the British Navigation Acts had. Paying tribute to Barbary powers smacked too much of subjugation for American comfort. They had fought one war to remove imposed shackles.⁵⁸

Harassed by the French, English, and North Africans, American commerce suffered severely in the 1780s. “Trade” was indeed, as reported by a Philadelphian in 1785, “very dull here and daily decreasing.” Between “speculative bankrupts in every place of America, [and] the Algerines at sea,” he continued, “our trade is at present in a miserable situation.” A Boston newspaper reported rising insurance rates for American ships because Algerian ships were outfitting at Gibraltar with the express goal of capturing American ships. Further, Algerians using Gibraltar proved to Americans that

⁵⁸ Christine Sears, “Submit Like a Man: Self-Representation of Masculinity in Barbary Narratives” (Master’s thesis, University of Delaware, 2000), 4-5; Irwin, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers*, 18; Kitzen, *Tripoli and the United States at War*, 10, 25; Osman Benchérif, *The Image of Algeria in Anglo-American Writings, 1785-1962* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 9; Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790-1890* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 27.

the British “countenanced in their depredations upon our Commerce.” The world seemed to conspire against American trade.⁵⁹

Americans could do little against this seeming conspiracy because they were relatively powerless in the 1780s. To protect their commercial interests, they had little choice but to submit to North African demands for tribute. The United States, “weak and poor”⁶⁰ after Independence, possessed neither the navy nor the means to build one under the Articles of Confederation, and ratification of the Constitution did little to alter the shortage of funds in the new nation. Problems closer to home proved far more pressing than the more distant threat of Barbary corsairs, which, after all, affected primarily New Englanders and sailors. Americans struggled to keep their government functioning, pay off crippling war debts, and deal with domestic insurrections like Shays’ Rebellion.

After 1793, a period of European war “provided Americans with enormous opportunities” for maritime commerce. Americans exported wheat and flour to Europe, particularly to the Iberian Peninsula.⁶¹ Unfortunately, war meant a resurgence of

⁵⁹ “Boston, April 25, 1785,” and “Extract from a Letter Philadelphia, April 15, 1785,” *Independent Ledger and American Advertiser* (Boston), 25 April 1785. According to Glenn Tucker, insurance rates rose from about 10% to nearly 30% in 1793 because Algerians were outfitting to take American ships and maritime violence was increasing in general. Glenn Tucker, *Dawn Like Thunder: The Barbary Wars and the Birth of the U.S. Navy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, [1963]), 72.

⁶⁰ Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, xvi.

⁶¹ Michael A. Palmer, *Stoddert’s War: Naval Operations During the Quasi-War with France, 1798-1801*, Studies in Maritime History (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 3-6. For more on the 1790s trade resurgence especially in wheat and flour, which continued into the early 1800s, see Brooke Hunter, “Wheat, War, and the American Economy During the Age of Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (July 2005): 516-518.

privateering. Hundreds of American ships were impounded by the French and Spanish, neither of whom recognized Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality. Many of these American ships were lost in the Quasi War with France. Such activity was so pervasive that Philadelphia merchants "accepted piracy and privateering as inherent risks of transatlantic shipping" as long as they were still making money overall.⁶² Still, the costs were high, particularly for those seized by North African privateers, or corsairs. When taken by North Africans, the ship and its cargo were lost, and the crew suffered slavery until they were redeemed. Some Americans were held eleven years in Algiers, and Europeans were often enslaved for longer.

⁶² A. Glenn Crothers determined that British warships seized over 600 American ships between November 1793 and April 1794. They continued to take American ships into the 1790s; by 1797, American losses had mounted to over \$8 million. At the same time, American trade suffered from French privateering. By 1800, the French had detained over 2000 American ships. Between 1803 and 1813, the British, French, Neapolitans, and Danes had "captured a total of nearly 1,600 American vessels." A. Glenn Crothers, "Managing Risk on the High Seas: Virginia Merchants and the Incorporation of Marine Insurance, 1760-1815," Unpublished paper delivered at "Risk and Reputation: Insecurity in the Early Republic" Conference at the Library Company of Philadelphia, Oct. 4, 2002. General warfare included the Russians fighting Ottomans in the Levant and Black Sea, and Sweden attacking Russia in 1788. These conditions unleashed a crowd of corsairs. Roger Morris, "Experience or Yarn? The Journal of William Davidson and the Propaganda War Against The Barbary States of North Africa," *Archives* 23, no. 98 (1998), 30, 37, 47; Gelete, "Warfare at Sea," 25-52; Patricia Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade: Privateering, 1793-1815* (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Co., 1989), 13-16; McDonald, "The Chances of the Moment," 471. With the start of the Napoleonic Wars, hostilities moved "far from the North American mainland" and America experienced a "noticeable and sustained commercial recovery." Cathy Matson, "The Atlantic Economy in an Era of Revolutions: An Introduction," *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (July 2005): 363. The United States paid \$642,000, or one-fifth of all federal outlays that year, to free Americans enslaved in Algiers in 1796. Leiner, *End of Barbary Terror*, 20.

“The Most Abject Slavery”⁶³

Contemporaries and historians have struggled with how to label the African detention of Americans because it differed so greatly from American enslavement of Africans. William Shaler’s changing perceptions illustrate how tricky the situation was, and is, to define. When first appointed American consul to Algiers, Shaler decried the “preposterous” practice of making “slaves of the subjects of all governments which do not pay them tribute or otherwise propitiate them.” Not only was this system “degrading...to the civilized world,” but Shaler also worried about the “wretched victims” whose stories “would wring your heart.” In fact, he found the “horrors of the black slave trade” merely “tender mercies” when compared to Algerian enslavement of Westerners.⁶⁴

By 1826, Shaler had changed his assessment. He now believed that enslaved Americans’ “condition” was “not generally worse than that of prisoners of war in many civilized Christian countries.” After all, the “labor required” of them “was not excessive,” they were granted many freedoms if they had money to buy them, and they had multiple ways to get money. They were “treated with the greatest mildness” and

⁶³ Extract of a letter, 27 September 1794, Captain William Penrose, late master of the *President* to the owners of that ship, *Salem Gazette*, 17 February 1795.

⁶⁴ William Shaler served as U.S. consul to Algiers between 1815 and 1828. William Shaler to Jonathon Russell, U.S. Consul to Stockholm, Algiers, 26 September 1815, Shaler Family Papers, Folder Correspondence 1815-1818, HSP. Historian Frederick C. Leiner recently referred to Algerian enslavement of Americans as a “racket,” the “foundation of” North African “society and culture,” and a generally benevolent slavery in which slaves were not harshly treated. As proof for its benign nature, he noted that Cathcart was not ruined by it, but profited while enslaved. Leiner, *End of Barbary Terror*, 13-16,

those “who were industriously disposed easily found the means of profiting by it.” “In short,” he concluded, “there was [*sic*] always slaves who left Algiers with regret.”⁶⁵

At first, Shaler viewed Barbary enslavement of Westerners as cruelly barbaric and unspeakably horrible, but eleven years later, he judged it relatively benevolent. In those eleven years, maritime violence generally subsided, and far fewer Westerners were held in 1827 than in 1815.⁶⁶ Perhaps North African captivity seemed less dire in 1826 because it ended more quickly for those taken and occurred less frequently overall. Over time, Westerners joined Shaler in labeling North African enslavement as one or the other extreme: either a vile slavery of the worst type or a benign and even beneficial slavery.

Historians have been reluctant to call Westerners’ experience “slavery,” equivocating instead of labeling and defining the experience. Stephen Clissold and John W. Blassingame, for example, used the terms “slave” and “captive” interchangeably without defining either. Clissold identified the bagnios, or slave dormitories, as “slave-prisons,” thereby simultaneously indicating prisoners of war and slaves. Robert J.

⁶⁵ William Shaler, *Sketches of Algiers, Political, Historical and Civil* (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, and Co., 1826), 76.

⁶⁶ Connecticut-born William Shaler had many opportunities to observe American slaveries first hand. As ship’s captain from 1803-1808, he traveled widely including trips to Hawaii and China, but particularly to Spanish California and South America. He served several years as the American consul to Cuba where he found the people “so emotional and unstable and ignorant” that they “were utterly incapable of self-government.” From Havana, he reported to New Orleans to encourage Spanish-American cooperation. Roy F. Nichols, “William Shaler: New England Apostle of Rational Liberty,” *The New England Quarterly* 9, no. 1(March 1936): 72-74, 79, 85-86. In 1815, Americans attacked Algiers. The British and Dutch bombarded the city in 1816, at which point Lord Exmouth forced the release of 1200 “prisoners” there, and, supposedly, ended the practice of Christian slavery in Algiers. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 130.

Allison referred to Americans in Algiers as “captives,” but shifted to “slave” in his fourth chapter. Robert C. Doyle considered captive Americans prisoners of war, but then observed that their sale into “institutionalized slavery” was a “long-standing military practice.”⁶⁷

Meanwhile, captured Westerners inevitably characterized themselves as slaves. No doubt meaning to goad the ship’s owners into ransoming him, Captain William Penrose depicted himself as being in “the most abject slavery ever people were in the world.” Exaggerated or not, Penrose’s word choice was striking if only because it was so often repeated by Westerners, both those in Africa and those at home.⁶⁸ For Penrose and travelers like Martha Routh, North African capture differed dramatically from seizure by

⁶⁷ Barnby and Irwin similarly used “captive” and “slave” interchangeably as did Linda Colley. Ellen Friedman mixed terms in single sentences. She wrote, for instance, that “almost all captives were regarded as slaves and required to work.” Panzac favored “slave,” but also used “captive.” In the most recent work on this topic, Davis consistently labeled them slaves. Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, 4-5; Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*, 16-17, 87-106; Robert C. Doyle, *Voices from Captivity: Interpreting the American Prisoner of War Narrative* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1994), xi; Friedman, “Exercise of Religion,” 21; Colley, *Captives*, 46-47, 53; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 21-23.

⁶⁸ Captain Penrose was captured in 1793. Penrose, *Salem Gazette*, 17 February 1795. Allison addressed the captives’ use of the term “slavery.” Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*, 111-112. For use of the terms “slave” and “slavery” in Revolutionary rhetoric, see Peter A. Dorsey, “To ‘Corroborate Our Own Claims’: Public Positioning and the Slavery Metaphor in Revolutionary America,” *American Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (September 2003): 353-386; F. Nwabueze Okoye, “Chattel Slavery as the Nightmare of the American Revolutionaries,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (January 1980): 3-28; Peter Kolchin, “Some Recent Works on Slavery Outside the United States: An American Perspective, A Review Article,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28, no. 4 (October 1986): 772.

European or American privateers because European privateers purloined only property while Barbary corsairs took people in addition to property.⁶⁹

Defining North African enslavement of Westerners was, and is, complicated because it diverged considerably from the New World model of slavery. Of course, this North African slavery cannot be equated with the “institutionalized chattel slavery” that existed in the U.S., nor should North American slavery be used as the measure against which all slaveries must be gauged.⁷⁰

North African enslavement of Westerners differed in many ways from North American slavery. First, slaves did not reproduce. Most were male, and they were “denied access to local or slave women.” Their status, then, was not hereditary. To maintain a slave population, Africans had to apprehend a fresh supply, which they accomplished in raids at sea or on land. Second, unlike North American slavery, race did not determine who might be enslaved. In Africa, master and Western slave were divided

⁶⁹As one historian pointed out, “it is unlikely that all of the Barbary powers together captured more English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish vessels over the centuries than did French privateers.” French privateers operating out of St. Malo alone took two thousand British ships between 1688 and 1713. In their best eighteenth-century year, the Algerians seized forty-two ships. All together, the North African states probably took around five hundred ships between 1798 and 1815. Corsair hysteria surrounded Barbary pirates because they enslaved those they captured. Colley, *Captives*, 46; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 102, 104.

⁷⁰ Paul Baeplar, “White Slaves, African Masters,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 588 (July 2003): 93-94.

by religion and nationality while those enslaved in America might well share both with their masters.⁷¹

Few Western slaves toiled in fields. Particularly in North Africa, a few operated in elite positions and accumulated wealth and power, an idea American slaveholders found threatening to their social order. In addition, many Western slaves had “considerable freedom of movement during the day.” Even non-elite slaves might “wander freely” in Algiers and have access to money and property. Though most worked, labor was not the defining characteristic of their enslavement.⁷² They had free time in which they could choose to patronize taverns, socialize, or write to and read letters from friends, family and government officials. Most significantly, Western slaves could look forward to manumission.

On the other hand, many Westerners were never redeemed, but lived out their lives in servitude. While enslaved, they could be sold, though during the period under consideration this was rare. They were restricted to the region in which they were enslaved, and usually subject to the orders of a master or an overseer. Their choices were

⁷¹ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 15. Race played a larger role in New World and American slavery than it did in other places or times. In the New World, race was used as the basis for an “enslaveable outsider,” but race was only one way of differentiating between groups of people. According to Orlando Patterson, masters and slaves ethnically differed in about three-quarters of slave systems that he studied. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 4-6, 14-16; Campbell, “Introduction,” viii; Kolchin, “The Big Picture: A Comment on David Brion Davis’s ‘Looking at Slavery from the Broader Perspective,’” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 2 (April 2000): 3; Stanley L. Engerman, “Slavery at Different Times and Places,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 2 (April 2000): 482-483. Russian slaves were usually indigenous rather than ethnically foreign, for example. Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 172, n. 22.

⁷² Weiss, “French Idea of Freedom,” 235; Friedman, “Exercise of Religion,” 21.

constrained by their master, and, as “slave studies in the Americas” pointed out, “enslavement, whatever its mitigating circumstances...still means the loss of freedom of action, the denial of personhood, and at some level a constant climate of coercive violence.”⁷³

Neither the worst slavery that existed nor the most benevolent, Western enslavement diverged significantly from the “self-reproductive, racial, mainly agricultural, and non-elite in character” slavery seen in North America or in the New World.⁷⁴ Of course, slavery long preceded European colonization of the New World, and slavery in the ancient world had “been far more diversified, both in pattern of employment and in its ethnic composition.” Further, ancient slavery had not “denied the basic humanity of the slave.”⁷⁵ These slave systems predominated for centuries in many locations, making American or New World chattel slavery the odd-man-out rather than the standard, run of the mill slavery.

Many scholars have offered definitions of slavery, but, because the “concept of ‘slavery’ was highly specific to time and place,” it may be impossible to “distill” a “universal meaning” of the term.⁷⁶ For Orlando Patterson, slavery was “the permanent,

⁷³ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, xxvii.

⁷⁴ Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 161.

⁷⁵ Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 3-4, 16.

⁷⁶ Gwyn Campbell and Edward A. Alpers, “Introduction: Slavery, Forced Labour, and Resistance in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia,” *Slavery and Abolition* 25, no. 2 (August 2004): x; Kolchin, “Some Recent Works on Slavery Outside the United States,” 772. Archaeologist J. Alexander pointed out the difficulty of defining slavery, noting that

violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonored persons.” Africanists generally agree that marginality, not ownership of persons, made slaves.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, New World and American historians see slavery as a system of extracting labor.⁷⁸ None

“slavery is a term used so loosely in European languages and Christian societies that only by careful definition can it be used in studying human relationships throughout the world.” J. Alexander, “Islam, Archaeology, and Slavery in Africa,” *World Archaeology* 33, no. 1 (June 2001): 44. See also Joseph E. Inikori, “Slaves or Serfs? A Comparative Study of Slavery and Serfdom in Europe and Africa,” in Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, Ali A. Mazrui (eds.), *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 50-51, 55-56.

⁷⁷ Some scholars described slavery as a proprietary relationship in which one person, the owner, legally possessed the other, his slave. Slavery might also be defined as a relationship in which one person, the owner, had power over the other, his slave, often via the use of violence and coercion and continual negotiation. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 13, 17; Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, “African ‘Slavery’ as an Institution of Marginality,” in Miers and Kopytoff (eds.) *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Martin A. Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 3-36; Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 163; Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 21; Ehud Toledano, “Representing the Slave’s Body in Ottoman Society,” *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 2 (August 2002): 58; Yvonne Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, no. 2 (May 1996): 39; Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989), 13-14; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 2.

⁷⁸ Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). New World and North American slavery were systems of extracting labor. See Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998), 5; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 4-5. For Blackburn, New World slavery was distinguished by the “growth of an increasingly independent realm of commercial consumption,” and “related notions of capitalist private property.” Blackburn, *Making of New World Slavery*, 83. For further discussion of slavery and its definition see Gwyn Campbell, “Introduction: Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World,” in Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (Portland: Frank Cass, 2004), xi; and Suzanne Miers, “Slavery: A

of the definitions covers all slaveries, and all are flawed when applied to multiple specific cases.⁷⁹

Nominally part of the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, Algerian slavery was influenced by Ottoman *kul* slavery.⁸⁰ The slavery experienced by Westerners in North Africa, while bearing some resemblance to American versions, more closely resembled the variant found in the Middle East and Ottoman Empire. In their *kul* system, Ottomans gathered slaves via the *devshirme*, a levy

Question of Definition,” in Campbell, *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*; Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, “Introduction,” in Robertson and Klein (eds.), *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 304.

⁷⁹ For example, few slaves were actually “nationally alienated” or socially dead. Most formed linkages with those around them including real or fictive kin, masters, or other free people. The Ottoman *kul* system incorporated slaves into social networks rather than thrusting them into the margins of Ottoman society. Taken from their families as youngsters, *kul* slaves were, in theory, tied to and loyal only to the sultan. However, many studies found that they developed a strong sense of “communal identity in which slave origins and the fact of having been chosen for prowess, skill and physical qualities, were a source of pride,” and that they often maintained ties with their family. Dror Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler: The Dissolution of Elite Collective Identity and the Formation of Official Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 11, no. 2 (1996): 181-182, 184-185; Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 172; Dror Ze’evi, “My Slave, My Son, My Lord: Slavery, Family, and State in the Islamic Middle East,” in Miura Tora and John Edward Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (London, New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 75. See also Metin Ibrahim Kunt, “Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974): 233-239.

⁸⁰ Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 4-5; Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs*, 24-25, 40-42. See also Ehud R. Toledano, who referred to the area as “Ottoman North Africa.” Ehud R. Toledano, “European Slaves in the Ottoman Empire,” review of *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, by Robert C. Davis, *Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (March 2006): 140-142.

on Christian boys between the ages of seven and fifteen. The boys were nominally converted, trained, and assigned posts throughout the Empire. Those showing higher aptitudes became bureaucrats while others found themselves Janissaries, cooks, gardeners, or maritime workers. Some served in the very highest posts of Ottoman government. Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, thirty-four Grand Viziers rose through the *kul* stem; only four were Turkic and free.⁸¹ Though slaves, they owned property and “fully engage[d] in the political, economic, and cultural life of Ottoman society.” Because they joined the Ottoman elite, slave origins became a “badge of distinction” rather than a stigma.⁸²

⁸¹ Godfrey Godwin, *The Janissaries* (London: Safi Books, 1994), 35; Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 170-171. Cafer Ağa, the Chief White Eunuch at Topkapi, owned 156 slaves when he died in 1557. Alan Fisher, “Chattel Slavery in the Ottoman Empire,” *Slavery and Abolition* 1, no. 1 (May 1980): 34. *Kul* slaves were gathered in other ways. One later Grand Vizier was kidnapped as a child from Serbia and presented to Murad II as a gift. Evgenij Radusev, “Ottoman Ruling Nomenclature in the 16th and 17th Centuries (Monopoly of the ‘Devşirmes’—First and Second Stages,” *Bulgarian Historical Review* 26, no. 3-4 (1998): 48. Between 1785 and 1808, five of twelve grand viziers originated in the *devshirme* system, as did many pashas ruling provinces. Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler,” 187; Ze’evi, “My Slave, My Son, My Lord,” 74.

⁸² Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 10. If hard to define, their slave origin was, nevertheless, “part and parcel of their identity.” Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler,” 188-189. Some Christians volunteered themselves or their sons as *kul* slaves. Precluded from the Ottoman elite because they could not be enslaved, Muslims paid to have their sons enslaved as *devshirme*, and thus gained the opportunity to join the Ottoman ruling elite or, more simply, to escape poverty. Other slaves have been voluntarily enslaved. Individuals sold themselves into debt slavery or chose to put themselves under the control of another for protection or economic survival. In theory, this servitude was temporary, but in practice many “never achieve[d] the freedom that theoretically await[ed] them.” Debt slaves and contract laborers are sometimes referred to as “virtual slaves.” Caucasian women sometimes enslaved themselves in the Ottoman Empire to improve their social and economic status. Ze’evi, “My Slave, My Son, My Lord,” 74; Miers,

By integrating *devshirme* slaves into the ruling elite, the *kul* slave system offered “a channel of recruitment and socialization,” and a “major, though forced, means of linking individuals to patronage networks.” Even non-*kul* or domestic slaves were perceived as becoming part of the household in which they served.⁸³ In fact, historians of Ottoman and Muslim slavery insist slavery in Ottoman regions can only “be understood as a *social relationship*, as a dynamic give-and-take between owner and slave in a variety of changing situations.”⁸⁴

Kul slaves present a challenge to those attempting to define slavery. They do not easily fit into pre-existing definitions of slavery, and the give-and-take relationship is difficult to clearly delineate as slavery as opposed to other forms of unfree labor. Their

“Slavery: A Question of Definition,” 9; Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition*, 31. Godwin, *The Janissaries*, 33, 35; Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler,” 184.

⁸³ Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition*, 4. *Kul* slaves were a small minority of slaves in the Ottoman Empire, which embraced diverse types of slavery. Most Ottoman slaves were female, black, and domestics. Toledano, “Late Ottoman Concepts of Slavery, (1830-1880s),” *Poetics Today* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1993), 479-481; Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition*, 479-483. Because commercial agricultural slavery played a small role in most of the Ottoman Empire’s history, most historians labeled it a society with slaves rather than a slave society. According to one historian, the Empire did not depend on the “milder forms of domestic and elite slavery,” making it a society with slaves. Halil Inalcik found the opposite. In his view, Ottoman state organization and “various segments of the economy” such as the “silk industry, *çiftlik* agriculture, distance trade, as well as the extended house-hold type family of the upper class—all rested on slavery.” Madeline Zilfi, “Thoughts on Women and Slavery in the Ottoman Era and Historical Sources,” in Amira El-Azhaz Sonbol (ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women’s Histories in Islamic Societies* (Syracuse: Syracuse Press, 2005), 132; Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 172, 161; Halil Inalcik, “Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire,” in Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, and Bila K. Király (eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 34.

⁸⁴ Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition*, 161.

military-administrative duties and elite status bore little resemblance to conditions under American slavery, and, for that matter, had little to do with agricultural slaves in Ottoman society.⁸⁵ They more closely resembled their free peers, but were “formally defined as slaves.” For most, this meant that they “were bound to serve their master, liable to be punished by him, and linked to him by a special bond of loyalty.”⁸⁶

Though Daniel Pipes insisted that “real” slaves lacked personal freedom and followed another’s orders, many “free” people have been prevented from charting their own destinies. Late eighteenth-century American apprentices and indentured servants were not, by this requirement, strictly speaking free. Their labor belonged to their master, and they were required to follow that master’s orders. Into the nineteenth century a range of free and unfree laborers lived and worked within a skewed power relationship

⁸⁵ Toledano observed that Inalcik stopped just “short of arguing that military-administrative slaves were slaves in name only,” and dwelt on the “differences between them and the ‘real’ slaves.” For Pipes, military slaves were “persons of slave origins,” and not “persons in a state of legal and actual servility.” Toledano, “Late Ottoman Concepts of Slavery,” 21, 23.

⁸⁶ Toledano, “Concept of Slavery, 174-175; Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler,” 181-182; Toledano, “Late Ottoman Concepts of Slavery,” 482. Slave concubines similarly challenged categorization. Islamic law defined concubines as slaves; in fact, legally a wife could be either free or slave but a concubine only a slave. Concubines tended to be “absorbed into the family” they served. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition*, 14, 18, 30; E. Ann McDougall, “A Sense of Self: the Life of Fatma Barka,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 32, no. 2 (1998): 291-292. Daniel Pipes concluded that for Janissaries, many of whom came through the *devshirme* system, slavery referred only to their origins and not their status. For Pipes, a “true slave” could be sold and controlled by another, yet *kul* slaves could not be sold and many gained more control over their lives than some free Ottoman subjects. Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam*, 15-23. Toledano contended that Ottoman slavery more closely resembled models that “stress the mutually conditioning effect of the owner-slave relationship.” Ostensibly and legally slaves in their own time and place, military-administrative slaves elude a clear definition that covers their slave and elite statuses. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition*, 21-24.

in which their master or employer held the upper hand.⁸⁷ Slaves, then, represented only one group of unfree people. Further, some societies had no hard distinctions between “slave” and “free.” Indeed, “in Ottoman society, as in the West and elsewhere, freedom and unfreedom, captive labor and volitional work, physical autonomy and chatteldom, dependence and independence were not rigid dichotomies.”⁸⁸

Like Ottoman *kul* slavery, the African enslavement of Westerners does not clearly meet any given definition of slavery. To further complicate things, enslaved Westerners in Africa, like *kul* slaves in the Middle East, were a minority among the domestic, agricultural and manufacturing slaves, many from Africa, who more closely conformed to standard definitions of slavery. Those loath to label Westerners in Africa “slaves” compare their condition to these “real” slaves’ situations. Yet Westerners, like African slaves, were owned by a state or individual, were subject to a master’s or overseer’s orders, and could not dictate most of their conditions.

The way Westerners were enslaved and freed prevents some scholars from considering them slaves. Snatched at sea by corsairs supposedly waging *jihad* and held

⁸⁷ Campbell and Alpers, “Introduction,” x, 9; Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 172. See Campbell and Alpers for a discussion of debt slavery and forced workers compared to slaves. Sharon Block compared coercion applied to a slave versus a servant. Sharon Block, “Lines of Color, Sex, and Service: Comparative Sexual Coercion in Early America,” in Martha Hodes, (ed.), *Sex, Love, and Crossing Boundaries in North American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

⁸⁸ In Indian Ocean Africa and Asia, the line between slave and free was so unclear that the terms are not “particularly helpful tools of historical analysis” in the region. Because the difference between slave and free is so uncertain, historians do not agree on what constituted slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia. Campbell and Alpers, “Introduction,” ix, xxii; Zilfi, “Thoughts on Women and Slavery,” 134.

only until ransomed, they might appear to be prisoners of war, not slaves. Historically, however, slave status frequently originated in war. Ancient Mesopotamians enslaved prisoners of war, and Romans renewed their slave population through war. As Blackburn put it, “Roman slaves were sold” into slavery “because they had been captured while many African slaves entering the slave trade had been captured so that they might be sold.”⁸⁹ Medieval Europeans and Middle Easterners enslaved war captives during the Crusades, and both sides allowed these slaves to be ransomed. The French used enslaved Spanish and Portuguese prisoners of war to row galleys. As late as the seventeenth century, Europeans sold non-Europeans they seized at sea in Maltese and Livornese slave markets. A few Wampanoag Indians taken in King Philip’s war and then sold into slavery ended up enslaved in Tangier.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ According to Baeplar, enslaved Westerners cannot be equated with chattel slaves in the United States because they were not stolen from their homes, dragged over the Middle Passage, natally alienated from their kin, and forbidden to redeem themselves from slavery. Earlier, war captives were slaughtered; in comparison, enslavement was a more humane way of treating them. Fisher discussed the difficulties of determining if these were slaves or war captives while awaiting ransom. Doyle, *Voices from Captivity*, 26; Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 10; Keith Bradley, *Slavery and Rebellion in the Roman World, 140 B.C. to 80 B.C.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 20-22; Baeplar, “White Slaves, African Masters,” 93-94. For more on Islamic jurisprudence as applied to slavery, see Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, “Slavery and Muslim Jurisprudence in Morocco,” in Paul E. Lovejoy (ed.), *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004), 61; Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 24; Fisher, “Chattel Slavery,” 33, 36.

⁹⁰ Frey and Buhofer traced the European shift from enslaving and ransoming prisoners of war to state-maintained prisoners of war who would be exchanged at the war’s termination. For them, the shift was tied to larger armies and more brutality in war with a corresponding decrease in individual soldiers’ value. Patrick Crowhurst discovered the British changed their treatment of prisoners of war after the Napoleonic War. Bruno S. Frey and Heinz Buhofer, “Prisoners and Property Rights,” *Journal of Law and Economics* 31 (April 1988), 19-20, 27, 34; Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade*, 173-

Muslims had a particular need to take slaves in war since they legally enslaved infidels against whom *jihad* had been declared. Islamic law limited whom Muslims might enslave because “Islamic jurisprudence recognized” as slaves only “those born in slavery or captured in war.”⁹¹ In Ottoman territories and Eastern Europe, therefore, prisoners of war were a common source of slaves, though owners were generally willing to ransom those slaves for a price.⁹² War captives infused Ottoman society with slaves

175; G. E. Aylmer, “Slavery Under Charles II: The Mediterranean and Tangier, *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 456 (April 1999): 384; Bamford, “The Procurement of Oarsmen for French Galleys,” 40; Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9.

⁹¹ Inalcik, “Servile Labor,” 34; Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 36. Sometimes Muslims fighting the Reconquista exchanged Spanish captives for arms used to fight in Spain. Christians regularly raided Muslim communities to seize booty and captives who were “commonly reduced to slavery.” Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, 5, 8, 29; Ze’evi, “*Kul* and Getting Cooler,” 190, 193.

⁹² Up to the 1570s, Muslims defending Iberian territory sent captured Spaniards to Barbary where they were sold as slaves. In 1683 Vienna, the Ottomans captured 75,000 Europeans whom they kept together but used as slave laborers while awaiting their ransom. If sold to private owners, these state slaves, called *mire esir*, could still be redeemed. In the mid and late 1700s, the state had trouble collecting slave-prisoners from their private owners for redemption. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums,” 146; Y Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and Its Demise, 1800-1909* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1996), 30, 32. Maryna Kravetz briefly noted Russian slaves captured in Ottoman slave raids and permitted to redeem themselves. Maryna Kravetz, “In Their Own Words: East European Slaves’ Experiences in the 17th-Century Crimean Khanate,” unpublished paper delivered at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, 2006, Boston, Massachusetts. According to Kizilov, the “most common way” of obtaining slaves for the Black Sea trade was “through military raids.” See also Mikhail B. Kizilov, “The Black Sea and the Slave Trade: The Role of Crimean Maritime Towns in the Trade in Slaves and Captives in the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” *International Journal of Maritime History* 17, no. 1 (2005): 223-232, 234. American Indian slaves were often captured in war, too. For example, see Yvonne P. Hajda,

especially as the Empire swelled between 1300 and 1600. Ottoman soldiers gathered slaves in Bulgaria and Thrace, some of whom they sold to Venetians and Genoese for resale in European markets.⁹³ While European sources identify these individuals as slaves, Muslim sources used a variety of terms. Algerians termed non-Muslim captives *tutsaklar* or *kullar*, not *esir*, which, one scholar claimed, described black African slaves. Muslims applied the term *asīr* to prisoners of war and those taken at sea.⁹⁴ Regardless of how dubbed, these slave-captives were property, as the deed registered with the Algerian Treasury attested.⁹⁵

“Slavery in the Greater Lower Columbia Region,” *Ethnohistory* 52, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 565-588.

⁹³ Europeans raided Ottoman territories to get galley slaves. Ottoman soldiers sold war captives into slavery to make money although one-fifth of the captives taken or the value of those captives belonged to the Sultan. Even agricultural slaves were taken in this way. Muslims sometimes declared *jihad* specifically so they could capture slaves. The Barbary pirates, for example, misused the idea of *jihad* to enslave Westerners. Muslim jurists and others were concerned about the problem of wrongful enslavement. Inalcik, “Servile Labor,” 25, 36; Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire*, 44; Yvonne Seng, “A Liminal State: Slavery in the Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” in Marmon, *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East*, 28; Fisher, “Chattel Slavery in the Ottoman Empire,” 38, 144, 18; Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 27.

⁹⁴ The Ottomans “employed numerous nomenclatures for the legally unfree,” including ‘*abd* for slave, *abd mamluk* for male slaves, *jariya* for concubines while *mamlūk* meant owned and *ghulam* youth in military service. Nasser Rabbat, “The Changing Concept of *Mamlūk* in the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria,” in Tora and Philips, *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa*, 81. Seng found that the word used for a slave did not disclose his ethnicity in sixteenth century Istanbul. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums,” 146-147; Zilfi, “Thoughts on Women and Slavery,” 133; Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of Corsairs*, 113; Mohammed Ennaji, *Serving the Master: Slavery and Society in Nineteenth Century Morocco*, trans. Seth Graebner (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 94; Ginio, “Piracy and Redemption in the Aegean Sea,” 140.

⁹⁵ Ottomans enslaved war captives until at least 1830, when, in an “unprecedented decision,” the sultan decreed that those taken in the “Greek wars who had not converted

Like other slaves in Muslim lands, many enslaved Westerners in Africa were detained indefinitely and died while enslaved. However, Islamic law encouraged the manumission of slaves, and while most were not freed, slaves of all types were more likely to escape life-long slavery under Islamic law than were their American counterparts. A concubine who bore her master a son could not legally be sold during her master's lifetime and was to be manumitted when he died.⁹⁶ If their masters were willing, slave artisans signed a contract specifying what services or monies they would exchange for their redemption. Other Muslim slaves were redeemed from slavery by themselves or family members and friends, as well.⁹⁷

to Islam were to be liberated.” Sato Tsugitaka, “Introduction: Slave Elites in Islamic History,” in Tora and Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 2. Though legally outlawed in 1887, slavery, especially domestic slavery, continued to play an important role in Ottoman society until 1923. Similarly, in 1818, Yusuf Pasha of Tripoli reported that the Tripolitans still took slaves, “only we now call them prisoners and not slaves.” Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, 161; Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence*, 408.

⁹⁶ Shawn E. Marmon, “Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire: A Preliminary Sketch,” in Marmon, *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East*, 4. Slaves did not always welcome manumission. In Indian Ocean Africa and Asia, slavery sometimes provided security, food, and shelter that could not be procured as a free person. For this reason, slaves sometimes rejected freedom. Campbell and Alpers, “Introduction,” xvi, xviii.

⁹⁷ Urban, artisan slaves were most frequently able to buy their freedom through the *mukātaba*, or manumission contract. Agricultural slaves could do so far less often. Muslims freed slaves to expiate for sins, as well. Despite encouragement to manumit slaves, most slaves probably died enslaved. Marmon, “Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire,” 7; Seng, “A Liminal State,” 29; Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums,” 140-141; Miers, “Slavery: A Definition,” 4; Fisher, “Chattel Slaves,” 48, 146-147. Mehmed II allowed Greeks enslaved when Constantinople fell to work off their redemption; they repaired the walls of Istanbul in exchange for their freedom. Inalcik, “Servile Labor,” 28. Muslim West African slaves also purchased their own and their kins' freedom. Paul E. Lovejoy, “Muslim Freedmen in the Atlantic World: Images of Manumission and Self-Redemption,” in Lovejoy (ed.), *Slaves on the Frontiers of Islam*, 243, 244-246.

Western slaves' prisoner of war origins, possible temporary status, and ability to be manumitted was not terribly different from what could be found in other forms of enslavement in the Middle East or Muslim areas. Like Ottoman *devshirme* slaves, Western slaves in North Africa might serve in elite governmental positions and accumulate wealth. They could choose to convert after which they would be free, as long as they joined the Muslim polity in which they resided. Unlike the *devshirme*, Western slaves expected eventual release from their servile status. Also like *devshirme* slaves, most Western slaves did not hold elite status but performed manual and unpleasant tasks particularly those related to public works. North and northwest Africans did not attempt to incorporate Western slaves into their society, which, at least in theory, *devshirme* slavery did. Africans seemed more interested in ransoming these slaves than integrating them.

North and northwest African enslavement of Westerners more closely resembled Middle Eastern and Ottoman slavery than the North American variant. Since studies of slavery in Islamic areas are relatively recent and rarer than works addressing North American slavery, it is just becoming clear what constituted slavery in those regions and how it differed from New World slavery. Rarer still are works comparing slavery in the New World to that of Muslim areas, which may be due to the looming specter of North American slavery, but historians "should strive to understand what slavery....meant in given historical, social environments, regardless of whether it meant something different in other societies and at other times."⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Toledano, "Concept of Slavery," 171 n. 20.

In this dissertation, I consider how “*differing* historical conditions have shaped variations in” slaveries, and how this understanding could lead to a more complete picture of slaveries in both the East and West. To do so, I explore the historical conditions that shaped enslavement of Westerners in north and northwest Africa between 1776 and 1830.⁹⁹ The first three chapters look at different aspects of American and Western enslavement in Algiers. Chapter One focuses on American and Western slaves relegated to the *bagnio*, or dormitories, in order to explore these slaves’ interactions and the extent to which they formed a community. It also addresses related aspects of Algerian control over their *bagnio* slaves. In Chapter Two, I consider high status Western slaves: those who held rank prior to capture and those who achieved positions of prominence in Algiers. This chapter also addresses questions about how these slaves interacted with each other, with *bagnio* slaves, and with others in Algiers in order to consider repercussions of slave status in a slave system. Chapter Three considers Algerian slaves’ access to money and markets, and the implications of that access for slaves.

Chapters Four and Five shift to Americans who shipwrecked and were enslaved in northwest Africa, or modern-day Western Sahara. In Chapter Four, I analyze the conditions of Western enslavement and redemption in northwest Africa, and explore the relationships between masters and slaves in the desert. The last chapter details Westerners labor while slaves, their resistance to enslavement, and interactions between

⁹⁹ American slavery differed depending on region, time period, labor organization, size of holding, and owners’ personalities. See, for instance, Peter J. Parish, *Slavery: History and Historians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989). Kolchin, “The Big Picture,” 468.

slaves and others. Taken together, these chapters provide context and details about the enslavement of Westerners in north and northwest Africa between 1776 and 1830, and explore what was “peculiar” to this type of slavery in this location at this time.

Chapter 1

“ONCE A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, BUT AT PRESENT THE MOST MISERABLE SLAVE”: AMERICANS AND SLAVE COMMUNITY IN ALGIERS¹

When seized by Algerian corsairs on July 30, 1785, Richard O’Brien and the *Dauphin*’s crew, stripped of their status as U.S. citizens, became the “most miserable” slaves in Algiers. O’Brien and his crew were thrown into Algerian dormitories, called bagnios, with six Americans captured months earlier and other slaves who hailed “more or less from every port of Europe.”² Roughly one hundred and thirty American men shared this fate between 1785 and 1796. In spite of captives’ shared backgrounds and circumstances, Western slaves failed to form a cohesive slave community in the bagnios. In this chapter, I investigate the obstacles and tensions that prevented a Western slave community from developing, as well as the overlapping bonds of convenience bagnio slaves created and maintained.

¹ February, 19, 1790, copy of a letter to William Carmichael in Madrid, Richard O’Brien, “Remarks and Observations in Algiers, 1789-1791,” Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

² Robert C. Davis counted 1,800 Westerners enslaved in Algiers in 1785, including Spanish, Portuguese, and Italians. Robert C. Davis, “Counting European Slaves on the Barbary Coast,” *Past and Present*, 172 (2001): 99; John Burnham, “Curses of Slavery,” *The Rural Magazine or Vermont Repository* (Rutland: Printed by J. Kirkaldie for S. Williams and Co., January 1795), vol. 1, no. 1, 121.

Because Western slaves shared fairly homogenous backgrounds and a generally similar enslavement, they had the potential to develop a cohesive slave community that could act collectively. For example, all came from Western countries with Christian traditions. By the late eighteenth century, virtually all were taken at sea rather than on land netted in coastal raids. The vast majority of those captured were men who served in the merchant marine of their respective Western country; they had all experienced seafaring and trading in the late eighteenth-century Atlantic world. They also had ample free time together and away from their master's gaze.

In spite of their similarities, Western slaves in Algiers did not form a tight-knit community or communal identity. A cohesive community failed to appear due to slaves' many differences. O'Brien and his crew confronted slaves who spoke different languages, claimed varying national affiliations, and belonged to diverse Christian denominations. Slaves adhered to pre-existing divisions based on nationality and class, and they resisted community-building with those they perceived as different from themselves. Their desire and ability to form and maintain bonds with their fellows depended on many variables, including their nationality, status prior to enslavement, and their status within the slave system.

The Algerian system of slavery accentuated these differences, further hampering a sense of communal solidarity among already-divided Western slaves. By the eighteenth century, Algerians allowed Western slaves a great deal of self-determination, and this separated slaves who individually concentrated on their personal comfort and survival rather than the comfort of all slaves or the termination of all enslavement. Their relative

freedom resembled that of slaves in America who were permitted to hire themselves out. Self-hiring “relaxed the rigidity of the slave system” because such slaves acted as free agents. They sold their own time and labor, collected wages, and lived away from their masters, all of which encouraged slaves to “cultivate self-reliance” and “forestall dependence on paternalistic white masters.” In this process, American masters “lost direct daily control over their property.”³

In Algiers, self-reliance came not from hiring oneself out, but from possession of money with which slaves purchased a wide range of privileges from their owner, the Algerian government. Slaves who hired themselves out in America similarly expressed their independence by choosing how to spend their earnings. In Algiers, Western slaves with prior status or elite positions had better access to funds; their privileged access and its effect on a slave community will be explored in the following chapters. Bagnio slaves, with few connections and often poorer families, were at a disadvantage in this system.

³ Ronald L. Lewis, “Industrial Slavery: Linking the Periphery and the Core,” in Joe W. Trotter (ed.), *African American Urban Experience: Perspectives from the Colonial Period to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 39; Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 4-5. See also Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 24-25; Midori Takagi, “*Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction*”: *Slavery in Richmond, Virginia, 1782-1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 23, 41; Sarah S. Hughes, “Slaves for Hire: The Allocation of Black Labor in Elizabeth City Country, Virginia, 1782 to 1810,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (April 1978): 261. See also Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities, the South, 1820-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Algerian masters interfered far less in their slaves' lives than most American masters did in their slaves' lives. Some American masters did not "try to restrict" slaves' "recreational activities as long as they did not interfere with plantation routine," but most intruded into slave religion, family life, and even economic decisions.⁴ As "benevolent" paternalists, American masters "strove to shape virtually every space of [slaves'] lives." Due to these attempts, slaves in America "could hardly turn around without being told what to do."⁵

The Algerian government did not seek to shape their slaves' lives. Bagnio slaves were supervised only to ensure that they worked steadily, and Algerians interfered little as long as they did, in fact, work. Western slaves were allotted time to patronize the city's markets without supervision after work.⁶ The Algerian government encouraged slaves' market participation, whereas American masters feared their slaves' ability to express autonomy in market activity. After visiting the markets, slaves gathered in the

⁴ John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 108. For more on paternalism and the entrée it gave masters into slaves' lives, see Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 111-113; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Williamsburg and Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press), 284-286; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974), 3-7.

⁵ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 118.

⁶ According to John Foss, Algerian overseers drove them from the marine to the city where slaves were left on their own. They had to "appear" in their bagnio "within half an hour after they" entered the gates of the city. John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Suffering of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport: Published According to an Act of Congress, [1798]), 24.

bagnios, roll was called, and the bagnios were locked for the night. Overnight, the bagnios were monitored only by Algerian-appointed Western slaves. Since bagnio slaves were confined to quarters at night, Algerians were not worried about their trouble-making potential; they could make trouble only for each other.

Western bagnio slaves found the nightly lockdown palatable because they were housed with fellow slaves, often their countrymen, with whom they could interact free from the eyes of their Muslim masters. The Algerian government licensed bagnio taverns for their Western slaves' entertainment, and though they could remain open all night, they were not patrolled after hours. Bagnio taverns served Algerian interests by keeping slaves contented with food, drink, and companionship after work and giving them a feeling of autonomy and choice. Western slaves who owned and ran the taverns paid Algiers for permission to sell liquor and provisions to their clientele.⁷

Despite their hands-off approach, Algerians retained control over their Western slaves. Western slaves rarely revolted or escaped.⁸ Indeed, overt resistance of any type, particularly involving more than one slave, was extraordinary. Slaves who did attempt to

⁷ Anyone in Algiers could patronize bagnio taverns before the bagnio was locked for the night. Sailor James L. Cathcart described a motley crew of Arabs, Moors and even some Jews, all drunk, some half-naked because they had sold their clothing to the Christian tavern keepers, singing and shouting as they left the bagnio. James Leander Cathcart, *The Captives* (LaPorte, Indiana: J.B. Newkirk, [1899]), 50; James L. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity 1785*, *The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817*, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, D.C., 65.

⁸ See Gillian Lee Weiss for examples of Western slaves' revolt in Algiers in 1662, 1753, and 1763. Gillian Lee Weiss, "Back From Barbary: Captivity, Redemption, and French Identity in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Mediterranean," (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford, 2002), 54.

escape or fought the guardians were dealt with swiftly and painfully, often terminally. Since resistance accomplished little and most slaves were redeemed eventually, slaves worked to speed their own redemption or ensure their own comfort rather than fight the overall system of Western slavery in Algiers.

Slaves in America worked for their own comfort, but the space they carved outside of their master's interference was organized around family and religion.⁹ Bagnio slaves did not have to carve out space away from their master's prying interference. Algerians permitted slaves to retain their identities, nationalities, languages, and religions, and did not pressure them to learn Algerian languages or religion. Bagnio slaves' autonomy did not translate into communal action. Left alone in the bagnios nightly, they had the opportunity to form institutions for communal support. Slaves could have plotted insurrections or coordinated resistance and escape. They did not. Several obstacles prevented them from doing so. Slaves were divided by nationality and religion and the structure of Algerian slavery promised redemption and permitted economic privileges on an individual basis. Left to their own devices, bagnio slaves who did not identify with each other prior to enslavement found little reason to do so during enslavement.

⁹ Takagi, "Rearing Wolves," 1-2, 99-101; Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 25.

“Slave, Algiers”¹⁰

Newly independent Americans dreaded losing their freedom to Algerian corsairs who, they knew, enslaved those they captured. The first bearded Algerians boarding their ship snatched their freedom, yet their experience of enslavement was relatively benign. Unlike Africans, Americans did not suffer inland capture, a long march to a coast, and the long trip across the Atlantic. Rather, Americans were seized at sea, where they served or traveled by choice. Their “middle passage” consisted only of the journey to Algiers from the Straits of Gibraltar, not a grueling trip across the Atlantic. Virtually all Western slaves survived the journey to Algiers.¹¹

Enslaved Americans were not dragged to locations completely unknown to them. As seamen, they had interacted with a variety of cultures and ethnicities in many ports,

¹⁰ “Slave, Algiers, formerly Master of American Schooner Jay,” Samuel Calder to David Pearce, Jr., Algiers, 4 December 1793, *Naval Documents Related to the United States War with the Barbary Powers*, vol. 1 (Office of Naval Records, Washington Printing Office, 1939), 57.

¹¹ The Middle Passage from Africa to the New World took an average of nine weeks; this does not include transport time within Africa. Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For information on the Middle Passage, see also Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 18-21; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 103-104; Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 130-160; Johannes Postma, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), pp. 19-32; Mame-Kouna Tondut-Séne, “The Travel and Transport of Slaves,” in Doudou Diène, (ed.), *From Chains to Bonds: The Slave Trade Revisited* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 15-21; Lorena S. Walsh, “The Chesapeake Slave Trade: Regional Patterns, African Origins, and Some Implications,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (January 2001): 139-171; Raymond L. Cohn, “Deaths of Slaves in the Middle Passage,” *The Journal of Economic History* 45, no. 3 (September 1985): 685-692; Antonio T. Bly, “Crossing the Lake of Fire: Slave Resistance during the Middle Passage, 1720-1842,” *The Journal of*

including those bordering the Mediterranean. Some of their crewmates were Portuguese, Spanish, and French. In fact, many American seamen spoke bits of French, Spanish, or Portuguese when enslaved. Their fellow-slaves, most from European countries around the Mediterranean, were not completely foreign to them.

Despite these important differences, Americans were “disoriented and alienated” by the process of enslavement.¹² Mariner John Foss elicited the chaos of the *Polly*’s 1793 capture, which was exacerbated by confusion over who, exactly, was attacking. First, Foss and his crewmates thought an English privateer approached the *Polly*. Then, seeing that the sails were not English, they assumed a French privateer pursued them. When they recognized those boarding, “by their dress and long beards,” as Algerians, they were astounded. Captain William Penrose and his crew were similarly deceived. Until Algerians swarmed over the *President*, he believed a Spanish privateer chased them.¹³

Algerians regularly hid their ships’ identity until they pounced, which prevented their prey from abandoning ship or organizing resistance.¹⁴ European privateers alarmed

Negro History 83, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 178-186.

¹² Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 443-446.

¹³ Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 9; Letter from Captain William Penrose to his ship’s owner, Algiers, 4 November 1793, *The Pennsylvania Gazette* March 5, 1794. Using the flags of different countries to seize ships was a common practice that worked especially well in the Mediterranean because so many nationalities traded there. Patrick Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade: Privateering, 1793-1815* (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Co., 1989), 38-39.

¹⁴ Several examples of crews avoiding Algerian slavery by abandoning ship exist. According to O’Brien in July 1790, the Algerians captured a Neapolitan *polacca*, but the

Americans, but did not strike terror in their hearts as did the Algerians. A European privateer might search an American ship, even claim it as a prize and haul it into a European port; European privateers did not enslave their victims. Algerians wisely disguised their identity until close enough to attack. If all went well, Algerians poured over the deck brandishing weapons before their prey realized what was happening.

On the *Polly*, Algerians loudly assured Foss and his crewmates “in several languages, that if we did not obey their commands, they would immediately massacre us all.” The crew watched, helpless, as Algerians plundered the ship before stripping the crew of all but “a shirt and pair of drawers.” Foss lost even his shirt.¹⁵ Algerian corsairs stripped all slaves, regardless of their rank. This symbolically denuded them of their status and culture, transforming free men visually into slaves. Once in Algiers, they

crew escaped enslavement, as did a Genoan ship captured in August. A high-riding ship that could be armed and navigated year round, *polaccas* were ships with square sails manned by “as many as 150 men.” Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800-1820*, translated from the French by Victoria Hobson and completed by John E. Hawkes (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), 46-47. O’Brien, “Remarks,” 27 July 1790, 13 August 1790. According to James Simpson, an American crew detained by Algerians escaped in their long boat in 1793. James Simpson, Letterbook of James Simpson, 1793-1797, Library of Congress, 25. As late as 1806, an American crew abandoned ship to the Algerians. James Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 July 1806, Reel 2, General Services Administration, Despatches from United States Consuls in Tangier, National Archives and Records Administration Services (Washington, D.C., 1959). Robert C. Davis noted that in seventeenth-century Tripoli, less than one-half of corsair’s prizes had slaves aboard due to the crew abandoning ship. Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2003), 33.

¹⁵ Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 9-10. Penrose and his crew were “stripped to our skin” and given rags that barely covered them. This type of trickery was a longstanding practice. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 46.

provided each slave with uniform clothing that standardized the slaves' appearance and distinguished them from the general population.¹⁶

Treatment aboard corsair ships served notice to captives that they were all equally miserable slaves. Though constantly reminded that in Algiers they would suffer the "most abject slavery," they were immediately treated like slaves. On the ship, captives wore rags, ate little, and received almost nothing to drink. For the eight days it took Penrose and his crew to reach Algiers, they were served "black bread and water, sometimes a few rotten olives, and that we thought was a treat."¹⁷ This was also the menu for slaves in Algiers. Piled in the hold of a cruiser, Cathcart and forty others were

¹⁶ Penrose, Algiers, 4 November 1793, *The Pennsylvania Gazette* 5 March 1794; John McShane, Extract from letters, Algiers, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 13th of November 1793, to his owner, *Pennsylvania Gazette* 5 March 1794; Samuel Calder to the House of Dominick Terry and Company, Algiers, 3 November 1793, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 54. The "systematic pillaging, especially of clothing" was noted by other captives, as well. Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 98-99. In Algiers, Foss and his crewmates were handed what every bagnio slave received once a year: a blanket, a jacket, shirt, trousers, and a pair of "slippers." Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 19-20. The "slave costume" might vary considerably in Algiers itself, as slaves could buy clothing or might be issued clothing for particular slave positions. African slaves were "quickly clothed in European garb" of a loose fitting, drab, and ill-made cloth that would set them apart from others in Anglo-American society. Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Past and Present*, no. 148 (August 1995): 151, 154-155.

¹⁷ Rais Hudga Mahomet Salmia told Foss and the crewmates through an interpreter that they were all now slaves. Cathcart believed the *Dauphin*'s crew would have perished but for some "charitable" Turks who shared "onions oranges raisons and figs from their own private stores." Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 11; Cathcart, Account of Captivity, 10; Penrose, *Pennsylvania Gazette*. The Regency allowed few provisions for the corsairs themselves. They were provided biscuits, oil, vinegar and olives, plus enough burgul for one hot meal every seven days. Crewmembers could supply their own provisions on top of this allowance. Cathcart, Account of Captivity, 92.

“filthy to the extreme” and nearly suffocating from heat.¹⁸ These conditions mirrored those found in the Algerian bagnios.

Some Westerners worked from the moment of capture. Foss and his fellow-sufferers stood watch, a job with which they were familiar. The new slaves feared angering their new masters, and therefore acquiesced to every command. Keen on avoiding punishment, Foss and the men closely observed Turks on watch to discern how the job should be done.¹⁹ They worried until a Turk assured Foss that they were performing their duties satisfactorily. Thus placated, they took “great satisfaction to

¹⁸ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 8-10.

¹⁹ Until the early nineteenth century, Algerians recruited Turks from Anatolia. Like the Ottoman *devshirme* system, this provided a fresh infusion of soldiers and administrators for the Algerian state. In Algiers, the Turkish ruling elite held themselves apart from the native Algerians. Pananti found in Algiers “almost every race sent forth by the African continent, with the addition of several of the Levantine banditti, who are yearly imported from Smyrhan, and other parts of Turkey, for the services of the regencies.” Tal Shuval, “Poor Quarter/Rich Quarter: Distribution of Wealth in the Arab Cities of the Ottoman Empire, the Case of Eighteenth Century Algiers,” *Turcica* 32 (2000), 327; Tal Shuval, “The Ottoman Algerian Elite and Its Ideology,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000), 323-344; Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 42. In the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire oversaw recruitment of Algerian janissaries and because the military, or *ocak*, was largely janissary and because the *ocak* had immense power within Algiers, the Ottomans had more influence in Algiers than in the other North African Regencies. In Algiers, the *ocak* (or *odjak*), or militia, elected the Algerian Dey from among their own ranks; he was not appointed by the Ottoman Empire. Algerian corsair captains, or *rais*, came from various ethnic backgrounds, but were more likely to be Turks taken from Anatolia than were captains in other North African states. They were rewarded not so much in pay, but in having the privileges belong to the *ocak*. Panzac found that Turkish captains and ruling elites were more integrated with the indigenous population than were those in Algiers. Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 13, 20, 61-63; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 5; William Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 40-47.

think we had not committed an innocent offense...happy in being freed from the terrors of punishment.”²⁰

Further chaos greeted the newly enslaved in Algiers. Cathcart and those taken with him were marched “through the principle [*sic*] streets and market places of Algiers...followed by the mob who had gathered to view Americans we being the first they had ever beheld.”²¹ Foss and his fellow captives were similarly led through a cheering crowd. On their way to the Dey’s palace, their “ears were stunned with shouts, clapping of hands, and other acclamations of joy.”²²

At this point, captives’ experiences, which had been similar thus far, might diverge. The Dey, or ruler, of Algiers chose one-fifth of the captives first. He selected four of Foss’ crewmates, all boys, to serve in the palace. Palace service meant a chance to earn money, better clothing and food, and often better quarters. On the down side, these slaves were under the Dey’s and his administrators’ feet, and subject to frequent berating or beating.

²⁰ Foss and the Turk conversed in French. Three Dutchmen were on the cruiser that captured Foss; they had been on the American ship *Hope*, from New York under Captain John Burnham. The three Dutchmen were separated from the *Hope*’s crew because the corsair captain feared he had too many slaves on one ship. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 16.

²¹ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 11-12. These men were not owned by the Dey, but privately owned by those who outfitted the voyage. These slaves were taken first to their owner’s house rather than to a bagnio. In eighteenth-century Algiers, this was unusual; the government outfitted the vast majority of corsair cruises. Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 57.

²² The crowd thanked God for success over “so many Christian dogs.” Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 16.

Except for the four boys and one woman, all those captured with Foss were directed to a bagnio, home to most Western slaves. Going to a bagnio meant crowded accommodations with no privacy, no monetary tips, and little food. On the other hand, bagnio slaves were with their fellows away from the prying gaze of a master or overseer when not working. Foss much preferred the bagnios for these reasons.²³

For the newly enslaved, the bagnios were a scene of overwhelming disorder and confusion. Arriving in the early afternoon, Foss and those with him wandered around the empty bagnio bemoaning their hard fate. Then the work day ended, and the five to six hundred men, all Western slaves, inundated the building. Foss did not notice or record their nationalities. He noted that they all appeared “to be in more miserable condition than ourselves.”²⁴ Their condition, consistent regardless of nationality or rank, hinted at the future Foss anticipated for himself.

Meanwhile, Foss and his bewildered crewmates awaited instructions. Over the noise generated by hundreds of men, Foss heard a “man shouting out in the most terrible manner.” Foss did not understand the language, which “made it sound more terrible.” Fortunately, the man repeated his orders in English, whereupon Foss learned that they were to report to a Turkish guard. This Turk oversaw a Christian slave charged with recording their names and countries of origin, and handing them a blanket and slave uniform.

²³ Americans made up only a small minority of Westerner slaves. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 17.

²⁴ Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 18.

The terror had only begun for Foss and his crewmates. Awakened by shouts at three in the morning, the discombobulated men were driven out of the bagnio and put to work in the marine. For Foss, this was the “hardest days [*sic*] work I ever underwent before.” Enslaved Americans often referred to their first day as the worst, perhaps because they were disoriented and adjusting to their situation. Foss, for instance, never felt “such horrors of mind, as” he did “on this dreadful morning.”²⁵

Africans’ and Americans’ process of enslavement bore some similarities. Both were transformed from free people into slaves, but the slavery they experienced differed considerably. Africans conveyed to America confronted a slave system based on race and a master desiring to control all aspects of his slaves’ lives. Africans were often assigned new names and usually separated from their kin and ship-mates when sold to various masters. Algerians, on the other hand, were anxious to record their Western slaves’ given names and nationalities accurately to facilitate their ransom.²⁶ Most Westerners were housed in a bagnio with their crewmates rather than being dispersed to smaller, spread out holdings. Lastly, as long as slaves worked or paid not to, Algerian masters left them alone.²⁷

²⁵ Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 19-21.

²⁶ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 101-102, 315.

²⁷ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 45-46; Trevor Burnard, “Slave Naming Patterns: Onomastics and the Taxonomy of Race in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31, no. 3 (Winter 2001): 325-346; Jean Butenhoff Lee, “The Problem of Slave Community in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (July 1986): 333-361. Walsh argued slaves’ origins were more consolidated than previously thought. Walsh, “The Chesapeake Slave Trade,” 144-150.

“Friendship heighten’d by Adversity”²⁸

Historians of American slavery have described how connections among slaves could offset the trauma of enslavement. Africans and African Americans enslaved in America looked to their families, including fictive kin, and religion to provide a measure of autonomy, comfort, and respite from the invasive control of their masters. In America, slaves’ relationships gave them a “measure of latitude to shape their own lives.”²⁹ For this reason, many African Americans placed great value on their community, families, and religion.

Algerians allowed Westerners enslaved in Algiers an extraordinary amount of autonomy, so they did not have to create space away from a master seeking to control their lives. They did not, however, use this autonomy to forge a unified community. Instead, they forged relationships with select fellow slaves, particularly those of their own nationality. Like slaves in America, they based connections on proximity and perceived mutual interests, but unlike American slaves, they did not center community on family and religion.

Enslaved Westerners had no opportunity to create families in Algiers even if they wanted to. Most left families, mothers and fathers, wives and children, in America and looked forward to rejoining them after a temporary enslavement. In the meantime, they

²⁸ “The Diplomatic Journal and Letter Book of James Leander Cathcart, 1788-1796,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 64 (Worcester: Published by the Society, 1955), 426.

²⁹ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 442; Larry E. Hudson, *To Have and To Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press,

resided in all-male dormitories with limited access to women and none to wives unless they converted and stayed in Algiers. According to Foss, if a Western slave were discovered with a “Mahometan” woman, he was beheaded; the woman was tied in a sack and thrown in the sea. Their families sometimes provided monetary and even emotional support in the letters and money they sent, but these far-distant families could not furnish a daily buffer against slavery for their kin enslaved in Algiers.³⁰

Western slaves did not seem to rally around religion, either, though they could practice their religion freely if they chose. For non-Catholics, bagnios or consuls’ houses functioned as churches although ministers were seldom available to lead services. Americans in Algiers did not decry the absence of religious services or ask to attend such services. Seamen were accustomed to sporadic religious services while at sea where shipboard services, if held at all, were usually performed by the captain. They clearly

1997), xiv-xvi; 20; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 269, 316.

³⁰ One Christian slave suspected of meeting with a Muslim woman narrowly escaped beheading; the woman was tossed into the sea before their innocence could be established. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 36-38. In the seventeenth century, raids on coastal Europe brought enslaved European women into Algiers, but there are “no data on the contribution these captives made to the gene pool.” Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 8-9. The fact that Western slaves did not reproduce meant the slave supply had to be constantly renewed through capture. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters* 15. Algerian law denied Christian men access to Muslim women, including prostitutes. Since prostitutes likely plied their trade in the bagnio taverns, slaves might have availed themselves of their services. Two Turks “wrangled about a common woman,” or prostitute, in Cathcart’s tavern, for example. During this wrangling, one Turk shot the other. James L. Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 138-139; Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 32, 58; Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs*, 94.

found comfort in personal prayer, but perhaps this served their needs as it did when aboard a ship.³¹

Their Catholic peers did not rely on religion to cope with enslavement, either. Catholics could turn to priests associated with the Spanish hospital maintained for Western slaves.³² Catholic priests held daily services in the hospital's chapel, which one could attend if in the hospital, and priests could freely enter the bagnios. The priests, however, were not always appreciated by their enslaved co-religionists, particularly when the priests entered the political arena. French slaves from Marseilles tried to kill a French Catholic priest who denounced the National Assembly of France in a sermon.³³

³¹ Algerians let Western slaves practice their religions for several reasons. First, Muslims are generally tolerant of other monotheistic faiths. Second, Algerians may have believed that the best, or more submissive, slaves were devout and spiritually contented. Algerians rarely tried to convert Western slaves at this time, in part because they lost the ransom money for a slave if he converted. Once converted, one would be free, but expected to stay in Algiers. Ellen G. Friedman, "The Exercise of Religion by Spanish Captives in North Africa," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 6, no. 1 (April 1975): 32-33. Marcus Rediker found that sailors appreciated prayer as a form of self-help, but were not particularly interested in organized religions. At sea, of course, sailors operated in the absence of religious institutions, and shipboard religious practices were spotty and sporadic. Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 169-179. A few sailors had religious tattoos, which led Simon Newman to conclude that sailors "shared Christian faith with those on shore." Simon P. Newman, "Reading the Bodies of Early American Seafarers," *William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (January 1998): 74-6.

³² Churches were maintained by taxes charged tavern keepers, levied on brandy, as well as on charitable donations, which included alms from consuls and captives. In the sixteenth century, Catholic churches were in the bagnios and religious services were available to most Western slaves. Priests who had been enslaved officiated over many of those services. Friedman, "Exercise of Religion," 23-25.

³³ According to Foss, each bagnio had had a Catholic chapel since 1700. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 66; James L. Cathcart, *Journal Commencing January, 1st 1792*,

Most slaves, whether personally Catholic or not, esteemed Catholic priests as caretakers of sick slaves rather than providers of religious comfort. Catholic priests might also arrange for slaves' redemption, though they rarely did so in the late eighteenth century or after.

Religion perhaps fragmented more than it unified Western slaves. Americans mentioned religion when indicating a non-Protestant person, such as their Muslim keepers, or Catholic and Greek Orthodox slaves. They perceived all three Christian sects—Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox—as significantly distinct from Islam. While their Christian heritage differentiated them from their Muslim masters, it did not unify them. When Cathcart lay ill in the Spanish hospital, he was offended that Portuguese and Spanish slaves begged him to “restore” himself “to the bosom of the other church.” When ransomed in 1796, Americans left behind “chiefly” Roman Catholic captives. As reported by mariner Foss, this exasperated the Roman Catholics. They had been taught they were the only true Christians, yet they remained enslaved while Protestants were redeemed.³⁴

Even without religion or family, Western slaves might have coalesced, at the very least, around their countryman. In fact, captured Americans seemingly had a community-

8 March 1792, Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Cathcart, Extracts from My Journal, 123. See also, Cathcart, *The Captives*, 111-113; Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 12.

³⁴ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 33; Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 144-145. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, religion was the “primary point of fracture” in the bagnios, not, according to Davis, that bagnio slaves needed “much encouragement to squabble.” Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 112.

building advantage over Africans taken to the Americas. While Africans might not speak the same languages, practice the same customs, or claim similar tribal membership, American crewmates shared a common language, nationality, and customs. Americans worked and played together during their Atlantic crossing, and may have previously served together. Both Africans and Americans forged important ties with other slaves on the ship carrying them into slavery, but American crewmates had longer to build those ties and might have had more in common to begin with.³⁵

Americans joined an international group of Western slaves, most of whom had been sailors. Bagnio slaves not only shared an occupational background, but they were also forced to spend their time together in Algiers. These factors might have provided a foundation for cross-national ties among bagnio slaves, but slaves seem to have been loath to develop these ties, or, perhaps, to report them. The attempts of some bagnio slaves to build bonds with others got mixed responses, especially once slaves realized that the Algerians encouraged the purchasing of privileges by individual slaves.

The experiences of those taken on the *Maria* illuminated opportunities and attempts at building connections among Western slaves. When taken in 1785, the crew of the *Maria* joined thirty-six Portuguese men and one Spanish woman, the previous take of the Algerian cruiser that had already netted a Portuguese and a Genoese ship around Lisbon. Together they had experienced the trauma of capture, and they spent their initial period of adjustment together. The forty-three men, who were privately owned and

³⁵ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 448.

therefore not sent to the bagnios, were housed in one large room by their owner until dispersed to their new duties and new living arrangements.³⁶

A group of Western slaves embraced the newly-arrived American and Portuguese slaves on their first night in Algiers. “Christian slaves of all denominations,” reported James L. Cathcart, a mariner on the *Maria*, supplemented the newcomers’ meager dinner with fruits, wine, and bread, and “every thing they had that was cooked or could be eaten without cooking.” These slaves might also have been responsible for providing a spread on Cathcart’s second night of captivity. The first group introduced Cathcart and his fellows to the joys of the public baths, which anyone could use for a small fee.³⁷

These slaves welcomed new comrades in the time-honored tradition of sharing food. They knew from their own experiences that new slaves were given food unfit to eat, unfamiliar to them, and inadequate for their numbers. Beyond the practical concern, the food offering may have been calculated to trigger gratitude and breed familiarity, ensuring that some of the newcomers would view the philanthropic slaves as compatriots.

Cathcart appreciated the contributed victuals, though he nowhere mentioned any of these slaves by name, indicating that the sentiments and food mattered, but not necessarily the individuals who provided them. Of course, Cathcart may not have

³⁶ Cathcart, *The Captives*, 4, 12. The Algerian cruiser had taken “several Portuguese fisherman and two pretty large vessels.” The Spanish woman was purchased by the Regency, and then taken to the slaves’ hospital to await ransom. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 8, 12-15. For John Foss in 1793, a French priest served as a welcoming committee, bringing food to the new captures. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 18.

³⁷ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 12; Cathcart, *Captives*, 12.

noticed individual slaves rendering this service due to the shock of his recent capture. Surprisingly, Cathcart also found unworthy of note that these slaves had freedom of mobility, access to food, and the ability to use that food as they chose. In his newly enslaved state, he was comforted to know Christian slaves had property and money to use at their own discretion and found solace in the fact that some slaves shared these resources with fellow slaves.

If these helpful slaves meant to initiate the new arrivals into a community of slaves or create bonds among them, the attempt had mixed results. None of the Americans described bonds forged with those making this gesture. If Americans later helped any slaves, it was likely to be a fellow American, a response probably not induced by this greeting. Still, this provided a precedent for the newly enslaved Americans: that of slave helping slave.

The newly captured Americans and Portuguese were given little time to establish strong relationships with one another. The crew of the *Maria* and their Portuguese companions were separated after spending only three days together. Four or five old men were “sold at vendue,” and the Dey chose five of the *Maria*’s crew and eight of the Portuguese for palace service. The rest were purchased by the Regency, or the government, and sent to one of the bagnios.³⁸ Forced separation, and not choice, might have circumscribed the members of one’s community in Algiers.

³⁸ Cathcart, *Captives*, 12; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 11, 15.

In his account of captivity, Cathcart did not linger on his separation from the Portuguese men, but he dwelt on the last night the *Maria*'s crew spent together. Though Cathcart and his crewmates may not have perceived themselves as especially close prior to capture, they clung to each other in the face of an unfamiliar setting and changed status. Cathcart was reluctant to be separated from those familiar to him, both as crewmates and as fellow Americans. Further, the crew's separation signaled the start of their slavery in truth, a beginning Cathcart did not welcome.

In America, common national identities "drew [African] slaves together" even "across plantation boundaries."³⁹ Americans felt a similar pull in Algiers, where they may have banded together against other Western slaves who always outnumbered American slaves. Captured in 1785, the *Maria* and *Dauphin* were the first American ships seized by Algerians, and their crews the first Americans enslaved in Algiers. Until 1793, there were only twenty-one American slaves in a population of 1,800 Western slaves, or just over one percent of the overall slave population.⁴⁰ Those captured in 1785

³⁹ Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 104, 170-171; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 20-22, 41-42.

⁴⁰ By my calculations, Americans made up about 9% of the slave population on average, depending on the year for which one calculates. Using Foss' 1793 numbers, Davis listed 1,200 Western slaves in Algiers, about 130 of whom were Americans. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, xix, 18. According to Cathcart, Algerians owned about one hundred slaves in May 1794, 67 of whom were Americans, making Americans a majority. Since Cathcart's May list did not include Oraners, the numbers may not be accurate. James L. Cathcart, Month of May 1794, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785-1794, Cathcart Family Papers, 1785-1962, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New York, New York. Algerian corsairs increased their activities around 1798, so they held more Western slaves in 1799 than earlier. In 1795, only 630 Westerners were held, while in 1799, 1,050. Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs*, 114, 3-4.

had no fellow countrymen already enslaved to smooth their way as would Americans captured in 1793 and later.⁴¹ Since the English were protected by treaty from Algerian capture, Americans were probably the only English-speakers in the bagnios, as well. Like other bagnio slaves, Americans preferred interacting with those who shared their nationality and language while enslaved in Algiers.

“Unfortunate Fellow Citizens”⁴²

Enslaved Americans interacted daily with a varied group of slaves, most of whom lived in one of the three bagnios and toiled daily in the marine. Of the forty-three Americans and Portuguese brought in when the *Maria* was captured, slightly over one-half were sent to a bagnio. Ten of the fifteen men who served on the *Dauphin* were assigned to a bagnio; the five exceptions were officers. When captured in 1793, the crew of the *Polly* experienced a similar division: the Dey chose four boys to serve in the palace and the rest were sent to a bagnio.⁴³ The *Maria*’s crew was unusual in that five of the six men on board served in the palace initially.

⁴¹ Cathcart, *Captives*, 12. The *Maria*’s capture on July 25, 1785, made Cathcart and his five crewmates the only American slaves in Algiers until the *Dauphin* was captured five days later. This capture added fifteen Americans to the six captured on the *Maria*. In 1793, eleven American ships were captured, significantly increasing the number of American slaves.

⁴² Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 55.

⁴³ Barnby confirms that most Algerian slaves were consigned to the bagnios. H. G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War 1785-1797* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 44. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 15; Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 17. Foss listed the four boys as Benjamin Church, Benjamin Ober, Charles Smith, and John Ramsey.

Housing practices forced all slaves, even those in elite positions, to interact with fellow slaves—or gave them the opportunity to do so—because regardless of where slaves labored, most slaves reported nightly to a bagnio. Only the palace cooks and two Christian slaves referred to as *captains a proa* slept in the palace overnight. Even the Christian Secretary to the Dey, the highest post to which a Christian slave could aspire, had a room in the Bagnio Gallera. Only *papalunas*, who found their own housing, slept outside of the bagnios, and they were a minority of those enslaved. Over three quarters of enslaved Westerners called a bagnio home.

Bagnio accommodations consisted largely of long, narrow rooms with beds “hung in square[s] framed one over another four tier deep.” Slaves slept and recreated in these open areas. Locked in the bagnios each night, a slave might visit a bagnio tavern, talk with friends, work a trade, or sleep if he could. Hundreds of slaves created noise at the very least, and pandemonium at the worst in these large, open rooms.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The two *captains a proa* slept with the cooks in the palace. The cooks’ galley had several small rooms that housed the cooks and two *captains a proa* “closely but comfortably.” *Captains a proa* kept the lower part of the palace clean and lit the Dey’s way downstairs in the mornings. Philip Sloan held this position for some time. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 20-22, 114, 155; Cathcart, *Captives*, 54-55. The full details of bagnio slaves’ connections and conflicts is unknown because few bagnio slaves wrote about their enslavement. Former slaves who published narratives or left papers were invariably elite slaves rather than bagnio slaves. Captain Richard O’Brien, for instance, never lived in the bagnios, and though sailor James L. Cathcart did, he had a private room and an elite palace job. Mariner John Foss published his narrative—the only American bagnio slave to do so. A few European slaves also recorded their experiences. Other slaves, like O’Brien and Cathcart, hinted at their fellows’ lives in the bagnios, as do consular records and other official correspondence.

For African American slaves in America, shared ethnicity and experience of capture drew slaves together initially, but slaves usually aided those with whom they maintained close ties. They were less concerned about those with whom they had limited contact. Though contact did not in itself guarantee close ties or cooperation, bonds were most likely to grow among slaves in close proximity to one another.⁴⁵ Americans enslaved in Algerian bagnios regularly interacted at work and play, often unsupervised. This daily contact could have facilitated the formation and maintenance of bonds among slaves. However, bagnio slaves made fewer connections with slaves from other countries, and their close proximity was as likely to foster conflict as it was “community.”

Though Western slaves identified most strongly with their own countrymen, they rarely acted communally even with them. Their constant, almost continual, contact caused discord perhaps particularly with one’s countrymen. In addition, Algerian masters, like American masters, used “divide-and-rule strategies” to deter collective

⁴⁵ Slaves in America “cultivated solidarity in ways that created not one community but many.” Anthony E. Kaye, “Neighbourhoods and Solidarity in the Natchez District of Mississippi: Rethinking the Antebellum Slave Community,” *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 1 (April 2002): 2; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 624; Knotternus, “Status Structures and Ritualized Relations,” 137, 139; Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 88; John T. Schlotterbeck, “The Internal Economy of Slavery in Rural Piedmont Virginia,” in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (eds.), *The Slaves’ Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1991), 172.

action.⁴⁶ Algerians permitted individual slaves to purchase privileges, a strategy that encouraged slaves' focus on their personal comfort rather than concern for one's fellows.

On the other hand, their close contact inspired some bagnio slaves to assist one another, even across national lines. For example, some slaves rented private bagnio rooms, but were, from time to time, unable to pay the monthly rent. They were chained nightly until they could pay what they owed. According to Foss, their nightly session in irons touched their bagnio-mates to the point that they were "commonly relieved by the rest of their fellow sufferers."⁴⁷

This tantalizing picture of bagnio slaves helping each other raises more questions than it answers. Foss did not mention which slaves relieved their fellow-sufferers. Were they countrymen or an international mix of slaves with money? Did one slave pay, or, as Foss indicated, did slaves band together to free the unfortunate? If a slave had enough money to rent a room, would he also contribute to a fellow slave's rent? Did those who could not or chose not to rent a room contribute? Many bagnio slaves were "obliged to sleep every night upon the cold stones, with nothing but the heavens to cover them for

⁴⁶ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 442. Brian W. Thomas described how planters used privileges and material goods to create differences among their slaves. Brian W. Thomas, "Power and Community: The Archaeology of Slavery at the Hermitage Plantation," *American Antiquity* 63, no. 4 (October 1998): 531-551. See also S. Max Edelson's interpretation of skilled slaves' affiliation with their masters. S. Max Edelson, "Affiliation without Affinity Skilled Slaves in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina," in Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (eds.), *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

⁴⁷ These slaves were released each day for marine work. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 28.

want of money to pay this tribute.” It seems probable that they might have resented paying for a fellow slave’s special privilege, and unlikely that they would repeatedly bail other slaves out of this fix. Unfortunately, neither Foss nor others clearly elucidate this topic.⁴⁸

Italian bagnio slave Filippo Pananti decried the lack of slave cooperation and coordination in 1817. If slaves “were united by a common feeling of interest,” they might escape their slavery together. To his chagrin, however, he learned in Algiers the “extreme inutility of expecting much union amidst individuals of different nation.” Pananti admitted that cooperation seemed “less” likely when that “personal attachment” was necessary for “ensuring the success of a desperate enterprise.”⁴⁹ Indeed, escape from Algerian slavery seemed hopeless, even with cooperation and collaboration with fellow slaves.

A slave might swim to a European ship in the harbor, but most countries signed treaties requiring them to surrender escapees. To prevent escapees from getting even that far, Western slaves were watched closely and sometimes fitted with chains when

⁴⁸ Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 28-29.

⁴⁹ Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers*, 356-357. In 1601, about 140 Christian galley slaves “revolted and killed” several Muslim overseers, and “the governor of Tripoli,” took the governor’s wife and children, and fled to Palermo. They were “generously rewarded by the Spanish crown.” Ellen G. Freidman, “Christian Captives at ‘Hard Labor’ in Algiers, 16th- 18th Centuries,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13, no. 4 (1980): 620. Slave connections strong enough to sustain collective action were rare in America, as well. In Algiers, revolts were curtailed by locking bagnio slaves in overnight and meting out harsh punishments for misbehavior. Some slaves in America did undermine overseers’ authority and sometimes reacted violently against them. John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves:*

European ships sat in the harbor. Escapees could flee by water or by land, but “flying” into Algiers’ interior was “certain destruction.” Slaves who fled into the interior died or were re-enslaved by desert-dwellers. Western slaves’ failure to organize to escape, then, related more to the futility of escape than an inability to cooperate or organize.⁵⁰

Those who did attempt escape usually shared nationality or work assignments. Two slaves owned by the Secretary of the Marine tried to run away in December 1790, while two Oran slaves were missing in January 1791.⁵¹ One important exception involved fourteen slaves of varying nations who commandeered a boat in which to escape. They were re-captured and punished, but the threat of this very likely outcome had not prevented them from uniting for a common cause.⁵²

Rebels on the Plantation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9-11.

⁵⁰ Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence*, 356-7. Algerians also patrolled their harbor with ships to prevent runaways. The United States’ treaty with Algiers required the return of fugitive Algerian slaves. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 91. According to Gary Edward Wilson, seventy-four slaves escaped from Algiers to Barcelona in 1774, and forty-six overpowered their guards and fled Algiers in 1776. These were rare exceptions; most escapees were caught and punished. Davis concurred that few escaped from Algiers. Gary Edward Wilson, “American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations, 1784-1816,” (Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State University, 1987), 14; Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 19.

⁵¹ After one of these attempts, the Algerian government ordered “all Slaves to Shave their Beards so that they could not pass for Moors by their Looks.” O’Brien, “Remarks,” 5 September 1790, 5 December 1790, 10 January 1791.

⁵² When the Americans were ransomed in 1796, some of these slaves were still alive and still dragging the chains and wooden block attached to them as punishment. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 31-32. Slaves in the Ottoman Empire fled alone more often than in groups, though Croats were prone to escape in groups. Yvonne J. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, part 2 (May 1996): 169.

Conflict abounded among bagnio slaves, but, like cooperation, it seemed particularly prone to erupt between countrymen and co-workers. For example, three Spanish slaves were flogged for “wrangling in the Banio [*sic*] Gallera” in 1790. One of what O’Brien called these “catamites” was “Miss Golinda,” a male slave mentioned in more than one slave altercation. On the same day, another group of Spanish slaves were flogged “for some frivolous Disputes,” apparently amongst themselves.⁵³

Bagnio slaves must have fought with slaves of other nationalities though these disputes were not reported frequently or in detail. According to one American slave, bagnio slaves’ wrangling often “proceed[ed] to blows and murder often takes place.”⁵⁴ Surely tension surrounded the Algerian-appointed Western slaves who kept overnight order in the bagnios. These men were charged with grave responsibility, but possessed

⁵³ O’Brien, “Remarks,” 25 September 1790. Whether Miss Golinda was enslaved or not was not clear. He appeared many times in the bagnio taverns, and did seem to be a male. As Davis pointed out, “conditions in the bagnos [*sic*]...may have contributed to homosexuality among the slaves, who were not only denied access to women, but also made to sleep packed together.” Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 127. While other outlets existed, Western slaves could probably not avail themselves of them. An Irish renegade escorted an English captain to “a Moorish whorehouse that was kept by an other [*sic*] Irish Renegade of the name Diggins.” There, provided “with liquor and women they imagined to have spent their night much to their satisfaction,” but the night guard raided the house. The renegades were thrown into prison, and the English captain escorted to his ship. Cathcart, n.d. #27, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785-1794, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library, New York, New York. Slaves in America rarely acted in concert against their owners or overseers, either. Robert Olwell described a 1781 example of this occurring. Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 149.

⁵⁴ American slave quoted in Wilson, “American Prisoners in Barbary Nations,” 40. Davis found evidence of “regular brawls” between slaves of different nationalities. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 112-113.

limited power. They could order men chained overnight, but Turkish guardians delivered real punishment the next morning once Western corporals informed them of slaves' infractions.

Cathcart believed it helpful to stay on the Western corporals' good side. Corporals could be bribed to intercede with the Turkish guardians, which might get a slave out of work for a couple of days. If one had stolen goods to sell, corporals could help. Corporals turned on fellow slaves as well. They might share the proceeds of stolen goods with the Turkish guardians, and then blame the theft on an innocent slave against whom they had a grudge. Of course, staying in their good graces lessened the chance that one might be fingered for a theft. All of this indicated that corporals collaborated with Turks against fellow slaves, which must have angered their fellows.⁵⁵

Most slaves did not record the nationality of those who quarreled. Unless contentious slaves were Spanish Oraners, from the North African garrison of Oran, or possibly Americans, the nationality might not be mentioned at all. Despite attempts to blame Oraners for all strife, Western slaves clearly fought amongst themselves. One bagnio slave received 450 bastinado strokes "for an information being made against him." An unnamed Western slave and fellow Bagnio "Belique [*sic*]" resident reported that the first slave "Defrauded the Lyons of their Grub."⁵⁶ This petty slave tattled on a comrade merely for stealing food from the lions kept in the bagnio.

⁵⁵ Cathcart, *Captives*, 51.

⁵⁶ The Dey kept lions and tigers in one of the bagnios, where they created "an insufferable stench." Maintained "at the expense of the Christian Tavern keepers," these

Bagnio slaves did not rally together to rid themselves of a particularly hateful task master, whether Turkish or Western. Like escape, such resistance would probably have been fruitless, but these oft-together slaves did not attempt such actions though there were clear targets. Foss, for example, celebrated when they were rid of their “most Tyrannic guardian,” Sherif, whom Foss described as “in his element” only when “cruelly punishing some Christian captive.” While being beaten by Sherif, an unnamed American wished for the Turk’s death “the first time” he offered “abuse to another man.” However, he did nothing but wish. Bagnio slaves did not confront or sabotage Sherif; rather, they passively awaited his demise, which finally came when Sherif chased a slave that he felt moved too slowly up a plank. While on the plank, Sherif lunged at the slave, missed, and fell to his death. Foss felt happily vindicated, but slaves had done little to speed his passing.⁵⁷

Even when one of their own preyed on fellow slaves, those in the bagnio did nothing. Antonio Villarexo, a Spanish deserter from Oran, used fellow slaves so cruelly that redeemed Spaniards publicized his horrendous acts in Spain. According to Cathcart, Villarexo kept a “seraglio of abandoned wretches.” Seemingly, the “abandoned

animals presented several challenges for bagnio slaves. First, the animals’ offal—and there were as many as twenty-seven at a time—supported a multitude of rats. This was not all bad since starving slaves could eat the rats. Secondly, Cathcart claimed the animals “frequently” broke “loose and have killed several of the slaves, as they dare not destroy them even in their own defense.” Aside from Cathcart’s description, I have not read other mentions of bagnio slaves being mauled or killed by the animals, however. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 29; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 68-69; O’Brien, “Remarks,” 14 May 1790.

⁵⁷ Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 131-132.

wretches” were slaves completely without ties to other slaves, Turks, or countrymen, and so left to their torture. Intriguingly, neither the Turkish guards nor the Algerian government interfered with this man’s misuse of his fellows, either.⁵⁸

Bagnio slaves acted in concert on a few occasions, though even then, they did not act as a unified body, but formed smaller coalitions with those who shared their immediate concerns. For instance, American mariner and mates “ushered” the year 1796 in with a siege. Technically, enslaved Americans had just been freed by a treaty arranged by American consul Joseph Donaldson, Jr. As soon as he concluded the treaty, Donaldson secured a house for the American masters, or captains, but left mariners in the bagnios and marine. Subsequently, he was “besieged by several mates and mariners” demanding release from hard labor. The men further averred that they had “as much right to walking about town as the Masters.”

Donaldson refused to aid them, bidding them await patiently shipment out of Algiers. When Donaldson tried to force them to leave the consular house, the men declared they “had as much right to stay” at the house as Donaldson as it was “public property” belonging to all Americans. They flatly refused to work, even when Phillip Sloan, a previously freed Algerian slave serving as Donaldson’s interpreter, attempted to convince them to do so. Seeing no other option, Donaldson summoned the Turkish Guardians, who beat the American men down to the marine.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Cathcart, Journal Commencing January 1st 1792, 20 February 1792.

⁵⁹ In 1794, Sloan was freed by a Dutch-Algiers treaty because he served in one of the palace positions whose occupiers were automatically freed when a treaty was concluded

Nationality did not guarantee a bond or concerted action. The American consul attended to the captains, but had the mates and mariners flogged into submission. Not all the mates and mariners stormed the consular house. Those who did acted in unison when they perceived that such action would serve their immediate needs. They all agreed that since the treaty freed them, they should no longer suffer hard labor but resume the status of free American citizens.

Until united by an issue that mates and mariners agreed concerned them all, Americans did not act collectively. Similarly, individual American slaves may have helped other enslaved Americans, but they did not unify to protect or sustain all captive Americans. Western slaves sometimes engaged in cooperative behavior, but much less often acted collectively or communally. In part, Americans' failure to unite may be due to the diversity of those captured under the American flag. Almost all of the thirteen American vessels captured by Algerian corsairs listed one or more foreign crewmen; the *Maria*, captured in 1785, with an all-American crew, appeared the exception.⁶⁰

with any Christian nation. Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 155.

⁶⁰ The *Maria* also included Cathcart, who was not American born. Born in Ireland, he came to America prior to the Revolutionary War. Wilson, "American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations," 42. Other American crews included a Hollander, Spaniard, and even two Genoese. Cathcart, "A List of Beyliques American Livestock," 1 July 1794, Box 1, Correspondence 1785-1794. According to John Jay, only 8 of the 21 captured in 1785 were native born Americans. John Jay to George Washington, 16 November 1789, quoted in Laurence Peskin, "Lessons of Independence," 297, n. 1. Paul Randall, a New Yorker in London, wrote that only one of these men was actually an American. Quoted in Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 47. The mix of men from different nationalities on these ships fits with other data about American crews after the Revolution. See Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 25-26.

Charles Colville of the *Dauphin*, for instance, was a “British Born Subject but unfortunately captured under American colours.” This was unfortunate for Colville since the British were exempt from Algerian enslavement. O’Brien, the *Dauphin*’s captain, claimed Colville as an American, and bragged that Colville had “behaved himself so as to have the Esteem of all the Great Men and his Brother Sufferers and Countrymen.” O’Brien empathized with the fact that Colville, finding “no Great prospects in America....applied by Letter to his friends in Scotland.” Others tried this ploy in hopes of redemption. In fact, four seamen, but no officers, of the *Maria* and one-half of the *Dauphin*’s crew petitioned George III in 1786 claiming to be British citizens. Colville’s Scottish friends not only raised the money to ransom him, but also enlisted a member of Parliament to write Charles Logie, the British consul in Algiers. Logie obligingly arranged Colville’s ransom.⁶¹

The *Dauphin* also carried a French passenger, Jacob Tessanaer. The French consul was cleared to purchase his freedom, but the price asked was above what the French would pay. Meanwhile, American slaves discussed whether or not Tessanaer should be included in a general American redemption. Andrew Montgomery, first mate of the *Dauphin*, argued Tessanaer should be included as it “would Reflect no honour on

⁶¹ O’Brien “Bid adieu” to his “old Ship Mate and Brother Sufferer” as Colville boarded a Dutch frigate in 1790. O’Brien, “Remarks,” 24 February 1790, 2 July 1790, 4 July 1790.

the Americans to Leave him here let him cost what he will.” Unfortunately, Tessanaer died of the plague in 1793, rendering all such debates moot.⁶²

Even those considered “American” found things to separate them from one another. Some were American born while others were naturalized. O’Brien, for example, was probably born in Ireland, and was apparently seen as an immigrant by other enslaved Americans. When O’Brien was chosen to deliver dispatches, there was a “great deal of murmuring among the Masters,” who all felt themselves more entitled. After all, O’Brien was “an Alien and of course ought not be preferred before them.” Scipio Jackson of New York’s *Minerva* was identified as an African American, which may not have been an issue. No Americans alluded to any problems related to Jackson’s race, but, then, only Foss mentioned him at all. As bagnio slaves, Foss and Jackson were often together whereas other Americans who published their stories interacted little with Jackson while in Algiers.⁶³

⁶² O’Brien, Copy of letter unsigned note, 7 July 1790; 1 June 1792, Secretary of State to John Paul Jones, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 39; Cathcart, Journal Commencing 1 January 1792, 11 March 1792; Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 208-209.

⁶³ Cathcart, Diplomatic Journal and Letterbook, 343. Though ill, Jackson was forced to work until he died. Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 52-53. Cathcart’s comment about O’Brien is strange for two reasons. First, O’Brien had probably been born in Ireland even though historian Gary Wilson recorded his place of birth as Maine. Secondly, in an attempt to be released from Algerian slavery, Cathcart swore an affidavit in Algiers in which he claimed he served on a British warship. Meanwhile, he insisted in his journal that he fought on an American ship during the Revolutionary War. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers*, 88, 133-1344; Wilson, “American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations,” 42. Francis D. Cogliano found similar divisions among American prisoners in England during the Revolutionary War. Francis D. Cogliano, “‘We All Hoisted the American Flag:’ National Identity Among American Prisoners in Britain During the American Revolution,” *Journal of American Studies* 32 (1998): 24-25. See also Gilje,

For both African American slaves in the U.S. and Americans enslaved in Algiers, the “solidarity of slaves grew within narrow limits.”⁶⁴ In Algiers, even those who worked and lived together, which might have assisted them in forming bonds, felt a limited commitment to each other. In fact, their forced intermingling and freedom undercut their unification. Forced to be in close proximity, but free of their master’s gaze much of the time, bagnio slaves let national and religious divisions persist among them. They allied themselves with other slaves when they perceived a common interest or threat. Their allies generally included those who shared their nationality, indicating that threats to one’s group were perceived as most troublesome. Even relationships among countrymen, however, were riddled with conflict and concord, divisiveness and short-lived unity.

Whipping Boys from the “Damned and impolitic Garrison of Oran”⁶⁵

In America, African American slaves developed closer attachments to those they regularly saw, viewing those “beyond the neighborhood” with “suspicion or indifference.” Their concept of “outsiders” reflected a particular sense of community rather than a sense of class solidarity. That is, slaves perceived a select few, those with

Liberty on the Waterfront, 166-167, 170-182.

⁶⁴ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 624-625. Africans in America sometimes tried on and changed their identities, though some identified with those who shared their ethnicity. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 104-105. According to Hudson, slaves built the tightest ties to their families. Hudson, *To Have and To Hold*, xvi, 65.

⁶⁵ O’Brien, “Remarks,” 19 February 1790.

whom they played, prayed, intermarried, and labored, as part of their neighborhood, or community.⁶⁶

Westerners enslaved in Algiers perceived a smaller number of slaves as “insiders,” or were less willing to act communally and cooperatively than were African American slaves in America. Those in Algiers did not appear to bond strongly even with those they saw every day and night. In fact, though Americans joined an ethnically mixed slave population, their writings rarely reflected the bagnios’ diversity. No American planter owned as many slaves as the Algerian government had Western slaves, and perhaps being thrown together with so many other Westerners led bagnio slaves to define “outsiders” as anyone not sharing their nationality. Enslaved Americans admitted the presence of other slaves when commenting on slave violence, theft, snitching, or “turning Turk.” A non-American slave was sure to be the culprit in any of these cases.

Enslaved Americans represented one particular subset of Western slaves as particularly prone to brawl, drink, steal, and betray other slaves: Oraners. Though unique among Western slaves in Algiers, Oraners, as viewed by Americans, allow a glimpse of bagnio slaves’ contentious relations. These never-do-well slaves and their reported behavior suggest deep divisions among bagnio slaves, a division especially marked by differing nationalities as well as the problem of intra-group conflict among those in the bagnios.

⁶⁶ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 624-625; Kaye, “Neighbourhoods and Solidarity,” 3; J. David Knottnerus, “Status Structures and Ritualized Relations in the Slave Plantation System,” in Thomas J. Durant, Jr. and David Knottnerus (eds.), *Plantation Society and Race Relations: The Origins of Inequality* (London: Praeger, 1999), 137.

Oraners had served in the Spanish-held city of Oran, which lay about two hundred and fifty miles west of Algiers. This hotly-disputed port changed hands several times in the eighteenth century until Algiers took firm possession in 1792.⁶⁷ Europeans assigned to Oran were usually Spanish, though others who enlisted in the Spanish army also ended up there. Some Frenchmen, “lured by promises of lucrative postings in Mexico and Peru,” joined the Spanish army, only to find themselves poorly paid, badly treated, and “confined to the dismal Spanish presidio of Oran.”⁶⁸ In 1791 between 160 and 180 French Oraners suffered slavery in Algiers, but because they came from Oran, the Dey and his administration listed them with the Spanish slaves.⁶⁹

Soldiers were consigned to Oran as punishment “either for murder or theft.” Once in Oran, the unhappy “recruits” fled the garrison, running right into Algerians’ arms. Cathcart worked under a slave carpenter sentenced to Oran, due, he told Cathcart, to some “irregularity.” He deserted his post, but Arabs captured him as he fled and sold him to the Bey of Mascara, and the Bey presented him to the Dey of Algiers.⁷⁰

Americans viewed Oraners as doubly dishonorable: criminals who deserted their post. Americans were offended that Oraners, in fleeing Spanish military service,

⁶⁷ Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1977), 21; Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs*, 101; Cathcart, Journal Commencing January 1st 1792, 3 January, 1792. See also Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers*, 47-48.

⁶⁸ Gillian Weiss, “Barbary Captivity and the French Idea of Freedom,” *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 254.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 255, 259, 258 fn. 94.

⁷⁰ Cathcart, *Captives*, 50, 60.

seemingly embraced Algerian slavery. According to Cathcart, Algerians reviled Oraners for this reason, as well. Algerians labeled them *carneros*, or sheep, because they seemingly volunteered for slavery.⁷¹ During the eighteenth-century tug of war for the port, many *carneros* ended up in Algiers. In fact, this “Great Nursery for Slaves for the Algerians” provided two-thirds of the seven hundred Western slaves in Algiers in 1791.⁷²

Oraners occupied a unique position in the Algerians’ Western slave system. Their desertion alienated them from their country of origin, and, therefore, from hopes of redemption. As Foss observed, “The King of Spain it cannot be reasonably expected, will pay a sum of money to ransom people who deserted from his service, and by that means involved themselves in this predicament, therefore they have no hopes of relief till death.” Oraners were not among the four hundred Spaniards redeemed when Spain signed a peace accord with Algiers in 1785. Oraners were long-term slaves, and in this respect, they differed drastically from other Western slaves.⁷³

⁷¹ Two Oran-deserters held in Mascara, perhaps realizing their mistake, tried to “Make their Escape to Oran again,” but were recaptured three days from Mascara. The Bey of Mascara believed them to be spies. These two men, like other deserters, were consigned to the Algerian bagnios where they found little empathy from fellow slaves or their Algerian masters. O’Brien, “Remarks,” 7 February 1791; 10 February 1790; 30 October 1790; O’Brien letter to Congress, Algiers, 28 April 1791, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 29; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 64.

⁷² Spain heavily fortified the city in 1509, and then held it for almost a century. Oraners replenished a slave population dwindling due to disease and general redemptions in the 1780s and 1790s. Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*, 21, 53; Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs*, 101; Matthew Carey, *A Short History of Algiers*, 3rd ed. (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1805), 6; Cathcart, *Journal Commencing January 1st 1792*, 3 January 1792; O’Brien, “Remarks,” 28 March 1790; O’Brien letter to Congress, Algiers, 28 April 1791, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 29.

⁷³ Like other Western slaves, Oraners were sometimes permitted to purchase their own

For Europeans who left their own country to serve with the Spanish army, and then deserted the Oran garrison, the situation was even worse. Their acts reflected a certain amount of desperation. Convinced redemption would never come, Diggins, an Irish Oraner, renounced his faith and “turned Turk” in 1791.⁷⁴ In 1781, a French slave and two other Oraners stabbed a priest, almost killing him. This violent act motivated the French to try to ransom “their” Oraners. So many French Oraners were in Algiers that the French feared an insurrection if they were not ransomed.⁷⁵

The Spanish Oraner carpenter with whom Cathcart worked had long given up on redemption, but he channeled his despair into his work. Algerian elites respected his work, which kept him busy and earned him some cash to buy small comforts. Many Oraners did not respond so tamely. They either acted violently more often than other slaves, or American slaves reported their behavior more often than they did other slaves’ actions. Though Oraners may not have committed more crimes or violent acts than their fellow slaves, Americans perceived that they did, and accordingly recorded their transgressions more religiously than others’. Cathcart believed it a given that “few

freedom. In 1792, two Oraners did so: one, a slave for 27 years, redeemed himself for 300 sequins; the other, a slave for fifteen and a half years, for 500 sequins. Some were redeemed in August 1790; at least O’Brien wrote that the Spanish consul redeemed the Oran slaves for 980 sequins on that date. Cathcart reported that in 1799, many of the Oraners were still enslaved, minus those who had died or been redeemed by their families. Cathcart, *Journal Commencing on January 1st 1792*, 17 March 1792; Cathcart, *Captives*, 118-119; Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 86.

⁷⁴ Cathcart, 30 January 1792, *Journal Commencing 1 January 1792*.

⁷⁵ Weiss, “Barbary Captivity and the French Idea,” 257.

crimes” were “committed by people taken at sea.” Rather, when a transgression occurred, “mistrust” fell on Oraners.⁷⁶

According to Cathcart, Oraners displayed an affinity for backstabbing and violence, which, fortunately for other Western slaves, they turned most often on each other. In July 1792, Don Antonio Melians, “a fine lad of 16 years old and of good family in Spain,” was beheaded by the Algerian Regency. Two of his fellow Oraners—countrymen and workmates—were to blame for his tragic end. The two men stole money from their master, the Algerian Prime Minister, and then persuaded the “innocent kid” to take a share. He hid his share under his pillow, where the two thieves easily located and snatched it. They threatened to blame the original theft on the boy if he reported anything.

Once the Prime Minister discovered that money was missing, Melians was questioned and he confessed everything. All three men were imprisoned. The two older men persuaded Melians to escape alone. Algerians captured him scaling the palace wall,

⁷⁶ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 64. According to Americans, Algerians shared their revulsion of Oraners. Oraner “iniquity...made it a proverbial saying among the Mahometans that any bad person has acted like a *carnero* from Oran as they believe them and with great reason to be capable of anything.” For this reason, the Algerians did not normally place Oraners in positions of responsibility until the 1780s and 1790s when recurring plague and general redemptions of Spanish and Neapolitan slaves significantly lowered the number of Western slaves in Algiers. The slave shortage forced Algerians to use Oraners in elite slave positions, such as Christian corporals who were responsible for monitoring bagnio slaves overnight. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 64; Cathcart, *Captives*, 50-51, 60.

which was “Death by law.” Melians fell victim to the machinations of his money-grubbing countrymen who sought additional wealth at his expense.⁷⁷

Oraners frequented the bagnio taverns alongside other Western slaves, Arabs, Moors and some Jews. Even in this mixed company, Oraners injured each other rather than other tavern-goers. Perhaps fellow Oraners were targeted simply because they were nearby. Oraners may have self-segregated because of the negative stereotype applied to them, or they could have chosen to socialize with their countrymen in order to use their native language and talk about home, a choice other slaves often made.⁷⁸ At any rate, Oraners tended to be victims of Oraner violence.⁷⁹

A virtual blood bath occurred in 1796 when an Oraner named Gomez stabbed a fellow Oraner five times. Gomez stabbed a Christian corporal trying to arrest him, and even an armed Turkish soldier failed to faze him. An impressed Cathcart recorded that Gomez not only refused to give up his knife, but he also dared “any among them valiant

⁷⁷ Meliano was killed not for theft, but from events unfolding from it. Cathcart noted that Meliano, though an Oraner, was “greatly lamented.” Cathcart, Cathcart Papers, 3 July 1792, *A Journal of Remarkable Events in the Regency of Algiers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁷⁸ Presumably most Western slaves spoke at least some of the regional lingua franca, which had, according to Foss, a “kind of universal currency all over the Mediterranean.” Western slaves probably used it to communicate with their guards, other Algerians, and with one another. Sailors of all nations seem to have spoken a smattering of languages, as well. Still, their respective native languages were probably the most comfortable for them. Cathcart, *Captives*, 50; Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 60. On the use of the *lingua franca* and slave communication, see also Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 113-114.

⁷⁹ In 1790, a tavern fight between two Oraners sent one to the hospital with his belly slit wide open. O’Brien, “Remarks,” 17 May 1790. Davis described the mixed company appearing in bagnio taverns. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 99, 124.

enough to take his knife from him to come and do it.” He held them off for three hours. The stand off ended when a “rascal of a Spaniard his own townsman treacherously came behind him and knock’d him down with a large club.” The “cowardly” Turks disarmed Gomez, and he was summarily beheaded.⁸⁰

No doubt at least partially alcohol-induced, Gomez’s stand off was also fueled by desperation. Like other Oraners, Gomez stood little chance of being ransomed, and, in his despondency, he indiscriminately fought off Western slaves and Turkish soldiers. Gomez’s drunken misery affected his fellow slaves the most. They suffered the more serious repercussions, one being killed while Turkish soldiers looked on, happy to let Western slaves fight amongst themselves. Perhaps Gomez’s willingness to injure fellow slaves stemmed from the futility of wishing for his redemption, and the correspondingly painful realization that he faced life-long enslavement.⁸¹

Oraners also targeted those they believed responsible for their pain when those parties were assailable. In 1796, Oraners heard that a Spanish priest had money to

⁸⁰ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 161-162. This took place on the fifth day of Ramadan. Cathcart noted that it took three strokes to sever Gomez’s head while the mob celebrated “one more christian [*sic*] sent to Hell.”

⁸¹ Oraners other than Gomez defended themselves against threats, often while inebriated. In 1795, a noisy, drunk Oraner attracted the attention of a Turkish guard, who entered the tavern and started beating the offending man. In response, the Oraner drew a knife and stabbed the guard in the heart. Turkish guards once again deferred the dangerous job of subduing an Oraner to Western slaves. The Oraner managed to kill one Western slave and wound three before they took him into custody. Justice was again swiftly meted out to a trouble-making slave: he was “beheaded the same evening.” Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 34-35. Genovese commented that African American slave violence often involved alcohol use, and that more violence occurred in the “loose social

redeem them, but when some visited the priest, they found the tale untrue. Unwilling to accept the news, one miserable Oraner stabbed the priest fourteen times, perhaps ill-aimed times, as the priest recovered. Still angry, the slave stormed to the Spanish consul's house. Finding the consul gone, he located and killed a Western slave with whom he had a prior dispute. Apparently satisfied by his rampage, he threw down his knife and was beheaded the next morning.⁸² Neither the nationality of his slave target nor the cause of contention with this slave was recorded.

According to Cathcart, an Oraner perpetrated the worst treatment of fellow slaves, though the names and nationalities of his victims were not chronicled, either. Long-time slave Antonio Villarexo used "Slaves so cruelly that when the Spaniards were redeemed they sent his picture to Madrid and it was nailed on La Puerta del Sol for the passengers to know how he used the Slaves in Algiers." The fact that Spanish slaves felt the need for public vindication may indicate that Villarexo targeted Spanish slaves, or, maybe, only that they were angriest about his crimes. While his crimes were thus publicly trumpeted in Spain, Villarexo remained in Algiers abusing other slaves. Villarexo abused fellow slaves who had no connections, money, or choice. Maybe other Western slaves viewed his victims as outsiders, and therefore felt no compulsion to intervene.⁸³

setting of towns" than in the "more disciplined countryside." Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 635.

⁸² Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 24-25.

⁸³ The exact nature of Villarexo's crime is not clear. Cathcart documented it, but someone, probably Cathcart's daughter who edited her father's papers in 1899, thoroughly obscured the passage. The defaced section starts, "when he was here he used to keep a seraglio of abandoned wretches." After twenty-four years of slavery, the

All Western slaves may not have spurned Oraners all the time. In fact, Spanish slaves seem to have felt some connection to Oraners, who were, after all, their countrymen. When the Spanish, but not the Oraners, were redeemed in 1785, the “scene was truly affecting.” The freed Spaniards left their countrymen “with tears and embraces and prayers for their speedy liberation.” More helpfully, the Spanish consigned all their money and possessions to the Oraners, according to Cathcart, who remarked that there “probably never was generosity more conspicuous or carried to a greater length.”⁸⁴ Whether or not Spaniards and Oraners felt this connection while living together, Cathcart does not record. Only when leaving might Oraners have seemed appropriate recipients, as the most “Spanish” of the Western slaves left in the bagnios.

The fact that slaves quarreled amongst themselves, sometimes violently, is not surprising since slave-on-slave violence occurred everywhere that slavery existed. In the U.S., for instance, slaves “fought often enough to cause concern among their masters...and occasionally killed each other.”⁸⁵ Americans in Algiers, however, wrote as if violence and mistreatment of fellow slaves was the exclusive domain of Oraners even though other slaves surely squabbled with their countrymen and with other bagnio slaves.

Regency permitted an “old man” to purchase his freedom for 300 sequins. Cathcart, *Journal Commencing 1 January 1792*, 20 February 1792.

⁸⁴ Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 131.

⁸⁵ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 630; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 104; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “The Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South,” *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1247, 1251.

Maybe Americans blamed Oraners for the benefit of their audience of primarily American readers. In fact, Oraners' behavior provided an implicit foil for American behavior, showing that Americans were the superior people—and slaves. Intriguingly, few incidents of American slaves treating each other well or helping each other were offered as counterpoint to the Oraners' poor conduct. Only Cathcart recorded numerous examples of an American slave helping other Americans, and all of his examples consist of Cathcart himself aiding fellow Americans.

Americans probably chose Oraners as scapegoats for several reasons. First, Americans picked up Algerians' assessment of Oraners, and elected to interpret fellow slaves through their masters' eyes. Of course, the Algerians' judgments coincided with American prejudices that predisposed their negative view of Oraners. Americans preferred citizens loyal to their country, regardless of where they served. As deserters and people who appeared to prefer slavery to service to their country, Oraners were unappealing to Americans. Also, Oraners were long term slaves, and therefore desperate and more likely to turn on each other violently. Further, as long term slaves, Oraners were enslaved much longer than many Western slaves in Algiers. This gave them additional opportunities and reasons to fight with each other and other slaves. Nevertheless, Oraners' behavior suggested a Western slave community divided by nationality, and rifts even between those of the same nationality.

Conclusion

In 1792, Cathcart enviously recounted the story of a man whose Jewish brethren collectively undertook to save him. Confined due to insanity, the man broke out of his chains and instigated a fight with a Moor, during which he uttered “some invectives against the Mahometan religion.” This resulted in a death sentence. To Cathcart’s amazement, Jews proffered money for his release, to no effect, but, Cathcart was sure, “had it been a Christian Slave...there is not a Christian Frank in Algiers that would give a Sequin for his release.”⁸⁶ Cathcart’s bleak assessment was not far from the truth, particularly if applied to bagnio slaves: bagnio slaves infrequently banded together even to help one of their own.

More divided than united bagnio slaves. Unlike African Americans enslaved in America, they did not build families or focus on religion as foundations for community, nor did they create institutions such as religious groups or mutual aid societies through which they could help each other. They had the freedom to assemble fictive kin groups and aid societies, but they did not. Instead, they individually chose if and when to help a fellow slave or work together with a select few towards a short-term common goal.

Bagnio slaves partitioned themselves into national enclaves. They preferred the company of their countrymen, who shared their language, usually their religion, and often their ethnicity. Xenophobia alone does not completely account for Americans’ or Oraners’ exclusivity, however. The Algerian system of slavery encouraged

⁸⁶ Cathcart, *Journal Commencing 1 January 1792, 27 January 1792.*

countrymen's attachments. Redemption usually hinged on one's country negotiating peace with Algiers, so co-nationalists pressured politicians and consuls to open talks with Algiers. American captains and mariners wrote petitions and letters, sometimes coordinating such efforts with one another. So long as they strongly adhered to their nationalities, they were separated from slaves of other countries.

However, even slaves from the same country rarely united. While enslaved, few issues affected all slaves, and few touched slaves with shared nationality. Only the fact of enslavement itself united these slaves, yet they did not act directly against the Algerian system of Western enslavement. Perhaps the system seemed impossible to overcome, making collective action against it pointless. Nevertheless, given bagnio slaves' shared background, frequent unsupervised time together, and autonomy, it is a little surprising that they never joined together against their masters in the nineteenth century.

The very autonomy granted by the Algerian Western slave system contributed to the Western slave community's fragmentation. Without invasive masters trying to control all aspects of their slaves' lives, Western slaves had few shared complaints and, therefore, few reasons to act communally. Further, the Algerian system supplied good prospects for those with money or previous rank, encouraging each slave to make his own situation more palatable. Each slave, in effect, bargained independently with the Algerians to ensure that he was at ease while enslaved. Since their enslavement was temporary, they had merely to secure their own comfort until redeemed. Even slaves who shared nationality were inhibited from forming strong ties because some had the ability to successfully manipulate the system of Algerian slavery for their own benefit.

These successful, or elite slaves, their ability to secure a “high degree of control over their own lives,” and their separation from each other and bagnio slaves, are the subject of the next chapter, which further explores the issue of an Algerian slave community.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Wage laborers at Martha Furnace in New Jersey did not organize because dissatisfied workers moved on rather than attempting collective action. Like Algerian slaves, these workers independently arranged contracts. Conflict divided workers particularly along racial and ethnic lines. John Bezís-Selfa, “A Tale of Two Ironworks: Slavery, Free Labor, Work and Resistance in the Early Republic,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (October 1999): 677-700.

Chapter 2

“AMERICAN LIVESTOCK, NOW SLAVES IN ALGIERS”¹: WESTERN SLAVE ELITES IN ALGIERS

If Western bagnio slaves rarely acted communally in Algiers despite their continual forced proximity, they had even less incentive to band together with elite slaves in Algiers. Algerians extended exemptions and freedoms to elite slaves that secured them relative comfort while enslaved, a situation bagnio slaves surely envied. Algerians recognized two varieties of Western elite slaves: *papalunas* and administrative slaves. *Papalunas* held rank or social standing prior to capture, while administrative slaves achieved position within the Algerian system. This chapter traces how elite slaves' experiences diverged from those of bagnio slaves, and how these differences further undercut the formation of a Western slave community in Algiers.

Although this chapter is based on the writings of several Western slaves and consuls, I have relied heavily on the papers of two enslaved Americans who attained elite status, Richard O'Brien and James L. Cathcart. Both wrote extensively while enslaved, including letters and diaries. In addition, each represents a variant of elite slave: Captain O'Brien's rank allowed him *papaluna* status while mariner Cathcart attained

¹ James Leander Cathcart, "A List of Beyliques American livestock, now slaves in Algiers," 1 July 1794, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785-1794, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New York, New York.

positions within the Algerian bureaucracy.

Unlike American masters, Algerians acknowledged their slaves' prior social status. Masters demanded higher ransom fees for Western slaves with rank or social status, and they were accorded better treatment while enslaved.² While some American masters chose to confer position and privileges upon particular slaves, the Algerian Regency offered the same opportunities to all slave elites; that is, all slaves willing and able to pay fees or to fill Algerian posts.

In America, elite slaves might hold specialized jobs, but they did not “necessarily receive better treatment than their brothers and sisters in the field.” Indeed, the African American “slave population was relatively undifferentiated in terms of economic and social status.”³ Several factors limited stratification within the slave community. Most American masters owned few slaves, and slaves on small holdings rarely specialized in an occupation. On plantations large enough for specialized jobs, slaves filled such positions only temporarily. These things all impeded the growth of an “aristocratic” slave class. Still, slaves were, perhaps if only temporarily, separated by their work and associated perks. House servants and the rare driver, for example, might receive better clothing and housing than field hands, and cash rewards for service. Even so, most slaves did not accumulate property and wealth enough to completely divide them from their

² Daniel Panzac, *The Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend, 1800-1820*, translated by Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston: Brill, 2005,) 118-120.

³ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 52, 111; Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850* (New York: Random House Books, 2002), 60.

fellows. Further, the rewards often came with a price. House servants, for instance, suffered the constant attention, and perhaps abuse, of their master, along with possible separation from other slaves.⁴

Despite some differences in African American slaves' experiences, "much more united the slaves than divided them." Slaves were linked by common labor. Three-fourths of African American slaves in the United States toiled in the fields. The remaining one-fourth, house servants and slave artisans, were tied to field workers by race, marriage, religion, leisure pursuits, and, sometimes, even shared work.⁵

⁴ House servants and some artisans had greater access to money and clothing in the United States. Evidence uncovered by archaeologist Brian W. Thomas placed more and more expensive ceramics in quarters of slaves closest to the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's home near Nashville, Tennessee. Shane White and Graham White, "Slave Clothing and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Past and Present*, no. 148 (August 1995): 156-159; Brian W. Thomas, "Power and Community: The Archaeology of Slavery at the Hermitage Plantation," *American Antiquity* 63, no. 4 (October 1998): 535, 541; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800* (New York: Verso, 1997), 334. American masters may have treated elite slaves differently than other slaves, but, argued Kolchin, the degree of socio-economic stratification in the U.S. South was relatively limited. He found, for instance, "greater differences in material well-being" of slaves "from plantation to plantation than among slaves on any given plantation." Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 107-110. Larry E. Hudson, Jr., argued that cash in the slave quarters created "visible social and economic distinctions among the slaves," but McDonnell believed only a "tiny minority" of slaves "amassed significant amounts of property." Larry E. Hudson, Jr., "'All That Cash': Work and Status in the Slave Quarters," in Larry E. Hudson, Jr., (ed.), *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1994), 83-84; Lawrence T. McDonnell, "Money Knows No Master: Market Relations and the American Slave Community," in Winfred B. Moore, Jr., Joseph F. Tripp, and Lyon G. Tyler, Jr., (eds.), *Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 33.

⁵ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1976), 331, 338-339, 393.

Like their counterparts in America, most Western slaves in Algiers worked and played together; over three-fourths resided in the bagnios and worked daily. However, the remaining one-fourth, the elite slaves, lived a different slavery than those in the bagnios in terms of their living arrangements, work requirements, and relative freedom.⁶ Slave elites either did not work or did light tasks not given to bagnio slaves. Bagnio slaves relaxed only after a long day's work, and then only in the bagnios where they were locked over night. Slave elites moved freely day and night. They chose with whom to spend their relatively copious leisure time, and they generally spent it with other elite slaves or free Westerners, not bagnio slaves.

The barrier between bagnio and elite slave was not ameliorated by the kind of ties found among African American slaves in America. Western slaves had no wish to form new families in Algiers, even should this have been possible. They rarely shared family connections with other Western slaves although occasionally a ship's boy was the captain's nephew, though this seemed to have been rare among Americans enslaved in Algiers.

To some extent, Western slaves were linked by maritime work. As former sailors, they may have considered themselves part of the "universal brotherhood of the sea."

⁶ These figures are my own calculations based on Cathcart's, Foss', Davis', and Parker's lists. Cathcart, Month of May, 1794, Box 1, Correspondence Folder 1785-1794, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library; John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Suffering of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport: Published According to an Act of Congress, [1798]), 160-162; Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast and Italy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), xix, 18; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 10, 208-211.

Crewmates might have found a camaraderie that “offered solace in the face of adversity” from their fellows while at sea, but neither a “brotherhood” nor a strong camaraderie seemed to link those enslaved in Algiers.⁷

A “universal brotherhood” of sailors was hampered by loyalty to one’s particular ship, region, or ethnicity. Late eighteenth-century ships required relatively small crews, so Western slaves had served at sea with only a handful of their fellows. The one hundred and thirty enslaved Americans represented thirteen different crews, for example, and several different American regions. Seven of the thirteen ships sailed from New England, three from Philadelphia, two from New York, and one from Virginia. American crews included foreign-born sailors, and hostility sometimes erupted between native and foreign born sailors. Shipmates lived in close quarters for extended periods, and cramped living bred tension and rancor as much as built relationships among those aboard.⁸

The “universal brotherhood” was also fractured by rank. Sailors agreed to recognize a hierarchy of command that governed shipboard relations. Although mariners supposedly deferred to officers, officers and mariners constantly negotiated terms of service. Technically the captain enjoyed complete authority over his crew, but sailors resisted labor assignments, bad treatment and low pay with various methods including slowing down work and jumping ship at the first opportunity. The division of labor and

⁷ Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 69, 70-71.

⁸ Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 25-26, 80-82; Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 209-213.

constant compromises aboard ship “facilitated the emergence of discrete communities at the top of their hierarchy, among the officers, and, at the bottom among the men.”⁹

While some individual American masters encouraged “caste pretensions” among their slaves, Algerians enforced and even exacerbated their Western slaves’ sense of rank.¹⁰ Western slaves expected to be ransomed, a belief Algerians capitalized on. Once ransomed, Western slaves believed they would fully regain their previously-held status, so integrating while in Algiers was hardly worth the bother. Elite slaves maintained a distinct separation from lower status slaves by buying their ease away from those they considered their social inferiors.

Slaves Freely Attending Their Own Business¹¹

While American masters had no reason to discover the prior status of their African slaves, Algerians carefully identified and recorded their Western slaves’ rank when captured because they needed accurate information to arrange their slaves’ ransom. Officers commanded higher prices in ransom negotiations. They were also permitted certain privileges while enslaved. For a monthly fee, they could coordinate their own

⁹ Marcus Buford Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 208, 155; Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 69, 83, 86-88.

¹⁰ Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll*, 624. While owners imagined a social hierarchy with house slaves on top and field hands at the bottom, slaves measured their community differently. Masters rewarded some slaves with clothing, better housing, and the ability to earn money, which may have encouraged competition among slaves. White and White, “Slave Clothing,” 159; Thomas, “Power and Community,” 533-534.

¹¹ Giovanni Battista Salvago quoted in Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 88.

living quarters and victuals. Called *papalunas*, these slaves were not supported by the Algerian Regency, but had the freedom, and the trouble, of fending for themselves.

Possibly derived from *pagar lunar*, meaning “to pay by month,” *papalunas* paid the Regency a monthly fee that procured for them a host of privileges. They lived away from bagnio slaves, out of the bagnios, and without Algerian supervision. They moved freely about Algiers, day and night, and most of the time, they were labor-free. When required to work, they did tasks much less physically demanding than those allotted to their fellow bagnio slaves. They did have to arrange their own living quarters, supply their own food, and, often, their own clothing. *Papalunas* swore not to attempt escape, but the Regency also required that a consul or merchant guarantee their continued presence or promise reimbursement if they escaped. Certainly the American *papalunas* did not scheme to escape, but rather worked to secure their redemption.¹²

In theory, a *papaluna* could be any slave able to afford the monthly fee. In practice, only a slave with prior rank or someone to vouch for him was granted this status. Formerly, Cathcart reported, such status was bestowed “through the influence of slaves in the palace or Grandee’s houses;” that is, elite slaves might finagle *papaluna* status for other Western slaves.¹³ But by the late eighteenth century, elite slaves’ influence had waned. By then, only slaves with rank or social status were afforded this

¹² Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 10; James Leander Cathcart, *The Captives* (LaPorte, Indiana: J.B. Newkirk [1899]), 54. Since *papalunas* purchased their own clothing, they appeared visibly distinct from bagnio slaves. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 106.

¹³ Cathcart, *Captives*, 54.

status because the Regency assumed they could afford to pay and be trusted to behave in exchange for the freedoms their payment secured them. Approximately one-third of the 130 Americans enslaved paid this fee; the rest resided in the bagnios.¹⁴

Officers, particularly captains, were earmarked for *papaluna* status from the start. Captains were rarely sent to a bagnio; instead, European consuls, notified when new captures were brought in, arranged housing for them.¹⁵ In 1785, for example, William Carmichael, the American chargé d'affaires in Madrid, authorized the Spanish consul, Miguel de Expilly, to rent a small house for just-captured American captains and mates in Algiers. Captain Richard O'Brien did not reside in that house; rather, de Expilly allowed O'Brien to live in the consular house, where he stayed for the majority of his time in Algiers.

Papalunas' privileges and accompanying responsibilities resembled those of American slaves allowed to hire themselves out. In America, self-hired slaves "decided on their own where to work, how long to stay with their hirers, and even what prices to charge." These slaves paid their master a "stipulated sum of money," and used the remainder for room and board since self-hired slaves almost always lived apart from both

¹⁴ Forty or forty-one of the one hundred and thirty Americans were *papalunas* if calculated based on lists from Cathcart's correspondence and from Parker's research. Six officers (captains and mates), including the passenger Captain Zaccheus Coffin, and eleven seamen were seized in 1785. In 1793, twenty-seven officers and eighty-two mariners were captured. Cathcart, *Captives*, 54; Cathcart, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785-1794, New York Public Library; Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 10.

¹⁵ When captives were initially carried into Algiers, Western consuls had the opportunity to claim any countrymen and to contest their capture. Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 66.

master and owner. Any money left over was theirs to spend as they wished.¹⁶ Though they were at liberty to arrange their lives, their freedom was often constrained by pay low enough to prohibit purchase of adequate food. Like *papalunas*, they enjoyed considerable freedom of movement, which they used to establish social networks with other African Americans, free and enslaved, and with working class whites.¹⁷

While both self-hiring slaves and *papalunas* paid for their own maintenance and enjoyed much personal liberty, they differed considerably. Western slaves in Algiers purchased the right not to work, while African American slaves in America were given only the freedom to choose for whom they worked. American masters did not allow their slaves the privilege of not working, no matter what the promised price. North Africans had long allowed Western slaves to purchase various perks, including their own time. If a slave paid enough money, then he would be left alone to “freely attend his own business” while enslaved in Algiers.¹⁸

Prior to the late eighteenth century, any Western slave with money might purchase the privilege not to work. Even bagnio slaves paid to be released from the marine in order to work in the bagnios. Presumably, they sold their wares to cover the

¹⁶ Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 161, 38, 8; Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 25; Midori Takagi, “*Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction*”: *Slavery in Richmond, Virginia, 1782-1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 23, 41-42, 97-99, 101.

¹⁷ Takagi, *Rearing Wolves*, 97-99, 41-42.

¹⁸ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 88, 90-91.

monthly fee assessed for this privilege. By the time Americans were enslaved, this was no longer permitted. The number of Western slaves had dwindled precipitously due to redemptions and the plague, leaving too few available for marine labor.

Consequently, the Algerians limited the ways slaves could buy their way out of marine work. By the late eighteenth century, only *papalunas* could buy work exemptions, and even they were summoned “to labours for a few days at a time.” They did not cart rocks to the mole, an artificial barrier or breakwater protecting the harbor, or perform other jobs bagnio slaves were commonly assigned. Instead, officers reported to the sail loft, where they repaired and made sails for Algerian ships.¹⁹

Despite their favored arrangement, *papalunas* assisted when summoned. All Western slaves, even those “under all protections,” reported to the marine in August 1790 to “hasten fitting of the new frigate.” All Western slaves, “even them that was at all the Consuls houses,” lent support to a new frigate’s launching in November 1790. After a December storm badly damaged the Algerian magazine, “even the Masters and Mates” ported stores out of the building before it collapsed.²⁰

¹⁹ Slaves’ opportunities were limited because plague deaths and redemptions left Algerians with a shortage of slaves in the late eighteenth century. Cathcart, *Captives*, 54; James L. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity 1785*, The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, D.C., 138; Colley, *Captives*, 24.

²⁰ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 138. In November, an Algerian frigate, the *Hawk*, was launched. Officers did “Sundry Jobs” related to sail making such as caulking, setting rigging, and making jibs. When O’Brien was sent to the Marine “to make sails for the cruisers,” Logie asked Cathcart to the English consular house until O’Brien returned. Richard O’Brien, 5-11 November, 1790, 10 January 1791, “Remarks and Observations in Algiers, 1789-1791,” Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Richard O’Brien to William Short, Algiers, 29 August 1790, Papers of William Short,

In a few cases, *papalunas* reported for hard labor. Algerians moved Andrew Montgomery, the *Dauphin*'s first mate, from the sail loft to work as a ship's carpenter. Apparently, the *Vikilhodge*, or Secretary of the Marine, believed that all ships carried carpenters, and he determined to try all officers as carpenters until he found which ones were truly adept.²¹ Since he was not a carpenter, Montgomery was returned to his "regular employ" swiftly.²² O'Brien spent a few weeks cleaning mold from ships in the Ponton Grand, a highly unusual work assignment for a *papaluna*. Why O'Brien was sentenced to a period of hard labor is not clear. According to Cathcart, the *Vikilhodge* was angry with the British consul, and, since he could not directly attack the consul, "revenged himself upon one of his dependents," O'Brien.²³

In spite of the relative protection of *papaluna* status, these men were slaves. If ordered to work, they reported as directed, and their work conditions were subject to

1777-1853, August 21 to October 21, 1790, Container 9 ([Washington, D.C.]: Library of Congress Photoduplication Service, 1977).

²¹ Western slaves rendered the Algerian Secretary of the Marine as *Vikilharche* or *Vikilhodge*. The term was derived from the Turkish *vekil kharj* or *vekilhardji*, and was no doubt related to the rank of sergeant major in the *ocak* or Algerian Janissary troops. The Minister of the Marine oversaw maritime affairs, including caring for the arsenal and shipyard, and functioned as a foreign minister. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 18; William Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of the Corsairs*, The Centers of Civilization Series (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 43-44, 52; Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 14.

²² Charles Colville, the *Dauphin*'s carpenter, was redeemed by Scottish friends in 1790. O'Brien, "Remarks," 24 February 1790, 13 January 1790.

²³ O'Brien lived in the British consul's house at this time. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity* 1785, 136; O'Brien, "Remarks," 22 November, 1 December, 7 December, 21 December, 26 December, 1790; Cathcart, *Captives*, 120, 138-139.

change. Though they usually worked without supervision, in August of 1790, “the Master sail Maker” told the Turkish guardian, Bashe, that they were not “attentive to their sail Making.” Guardian Bashe asked them if they were “not all Slaves,” and threatened them with “100 Bastinadoes each.” Fourteen days later, he sent a Turk to oversee their work.²⁴

Papalunas were subject to the same physical punishments doled out to other Western slaves. They felt an overseer’s wrath less frequently, but only because they purchased escape from the cruel and capricious eyes of overseers. Still, Guardian Bashe delivered a severe thrashing “without any provocation” to Captain Palma in 1791.²⁵ Their relative freedom sometimes obscured the fact that they were slaves who lived at the mercy of their Algerian masters

“Humiliating Dependence”²⁶

Because Algerian owners, European consuls and the U.S. government placed a high value on their rank, officers secured comforts denied their underlings. Staying out of the bagnios required dependence not only on the Algerians, who enslaved them while allowing them to purchase *papaluna* status, but also on outside support and sources of money. Since *papalunas* paid a monthly fee and maintained themselves, men purchasing this status had to have readily-available money, which is why only American captains

²⁴ O’Brien, “Remarks,” 7 August 1790, 18 August 1790.

²⁵ Captain Palma of Naples was redeemed by Neapolitan friars. O’Brien, “Remarks,” 26 September 1790, 10 January 1791.

²⁶ O’Brien, “Remarks,” 4 July 1790.

and mates held this status. Officers, but particularly captains, had resources available to them that were out of most mariners' reach. Captains and officers belonged to a different social class than sailors, and they were often older than the average mariner and thus had longer to save and build wealth. They might possess savings, a house, or other assets against which they could borrow money in their time of need. Generally, they had "greater economic wherewithal" than mariners.²⁷

Captains and mates called on social and business networks outside of Algiers to secure funds. Their ability to command resources through networks established prior to capture and their ability to parley their rank into new connections, made them good candidates for *papalunas*, who, above all, had to have an ever-ready line of money. Their Algerian captors recognized that *papalunas* had to have access to money, and therefore, extended the privileges of this status only to captains and sometimes mates, but not to their mariner fellows.

Officers used their rank and outside connections to curry favor with European consuls in Algiers. A consul's support was crucial, as consuls secured housing for officers, vouched for those allowed to be *papalunas*, and assumed responsibility for their conduct. Consuls refused to guarantee bagnio slaves' behavior because "so many misbehaved" while working their trade in the bagnios. Consuls presumed officers knew

²⁷ Ships' masters likely achieved their post "through reputation," so they had good connections when appointed. According to Gilje, most sailors spent their money quickly, the exception being those with families. Officers formed societies to help their families out if they were incapacitated or lost. Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 176, 117; Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 14, 24, 57; Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 12-13.

how to and would choose to behave, so by the late eighteenth century, consuls would be responsible only for those they employed in their own house or men with rank who could presumably be trusted to behave appropriately. They seemed unwilling to back mariners for anything that required promising good behavior or covering expenses.²⁸

Consuls chose officers, rarely mariners, to work in their houses. Immediately after capture in 1785, for example, Captains Richard O'Brien, Isaac Stephens, and Zaccheus Coffin worked as domestics for the British consul, Charles Logie, who rented them from the Regency for this purpose. Logie may have thought captains were more trustworthy than mariners or more likely to behave. When arranging the U.S.-Algerian treaty in 1796, however, Joseph Donaldson, Jr., chose American mariners to serve in the American consular house. Perhaps Donaldson felt that choosing "common men" better represented American republicanism, but European consuls overwhelmingly chose officers rather than mariners. Of course, Donaldson may not have wanted men who were his social peers—captains and mates—serving him.²⁹

The American government also invested in those with rank more than those without. The government facilitated officers' privileges and separation from their crews in two ways. First, the government paid an allowance to all enslaved Americans for a time, and captains and mates were paid significantly more than mariners. Greater pay

²⁸ Cathcart, *Captives*, 54.

²⁹ Donaldson rented John Foss, Abiel Willis, and Thomas Billings from the Regency, which meant he assumed responsibility for their behavior as well as paying a monthly fee. He used the men as consular domestics. Though Foss appreciated release from the marine, he lamented that "still we were slaves." Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Sufferings*, 136-137.

aided officers in affording *papaluna* status. Secondly, the government rented a house for officers, but did not provide this service for mariners. By supplying them with rent and cash for sustenance, the government subsidized their special treatment. The government also paid more for their redemption than it did for mariners.³⁰

Though their rank initially secured *papaluna* status, their continued comfort depended on favors extended to them, so they needed to make and maintain personal connections with those in a position to aid them. Captains O'Brien, Stephens, and Coffin learned just how important aid could be. While they served the British consul, Charles Logie, as domestics, they were free from the bagnio masses and manual labor in the marine, but, still, the captains bemoaned the inescapable fact that they were slaves to a British—Christian and English-speaking—person. Cathcart concurred, and when he visited them and saw them planting a tree and feeding hogs, he felt they suffered “every indignity that inhumanity could devise to render their situation humiliating in the extreme.”³¹ Cathcart himself, assigned to the Dey’s palace, had not yet experienced bagnio living or marine labor.

³⁰ Captains cost as much as 4000 sequins each while mariners went for 2000 sequins or less apiece. “The Diplomatic Journal and Letter Book of James Leander Cathcart, 1788-1796,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 64 (Worcester: Published by the Society, 1955): 357. The Algerians initially asked for 4000 sequins per American captain, 3000 per mate, and 1500 per mariner. The going rate for an ordinary seaman was about five hundred dollars. Captain John M’Shane to William Bell, Algiers, 13 November 1793, quoted in Matthew Carey, *A Short History of Algiers*, 3rd ed. (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1805), 83; Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 216.

³¹ Cathcart was offended to see Americans serving an Englishman so soon after the Revolutionary War, and by a Christian enslaving other Christians. Cathcart, *Captives*, 17, 24.

William Carmichael, the American chargé d'affaires in Madrid, rescued the captains from this demeaning domestic service. He rented a small house for the American captains and mates where they lived "very comfortably for some time" because of the "supplies furnished them by Mr. Carmichael" and "their friends in the palace," that is, fellow slaves. Carmichael funneled money from the United States to the men, but they needed additional support from men like mariner Cathcart who held status in the Algerian slaves system. Thus shielded from the bagnios, they did little to assist their former crewmates although they depended on some of them for their own support.³²

With the help of European consuls, O'Brien maneuvered a living situation different even from other American *papalunas*. As he put it, he initially "fell in with" Logie, who "kept" him for "some time" until he met "a more friendly Allie [*sic*]," the Spanish consul. O'Brien did not join the American officers in their rented house, but lived in the Spanish consul's house, a solution he brokered directly with the consul.³³ Why he chose to reside with the consul rather than his fellow captains and mates, he did not say. Perhaps he hoped that the consul might arrange his ransom. The private quarters made available to him may have influenced his decision. Regardless of why, O'Brien clearly had some choice in arranging his living quarters.

O'Brien's decision to live with de Expilly made him the Spanish consul's dependent. In fact, all the officers received outside aid, and were, therefore, dependents

³² Cathcart, *Captives*, 17-18. O'Brien, "Remarks," 26 February 1790. Cathcart was one of the friends in the palace. Cathcart, *Captives*, 23.

³³ O'Brien, "Remarks," 26 February 1790.

of those who supported them. O'Brien was doubly so: he relied on the American government to pay the Spanish consul and on the Spanish consul to allow him residential privileges. He did not relish being a dependent supplicant. Since officers depended on others to maintain *papaluna* status, when push came to shove, they had limited choices. They lived at the whim of Algerians, who might revoke their status or put them to work; at the whim of the American government, which might stop sending money; and at the whim of their protector, if they had one.

O'Brien faced limited options, for example, when de Expilly asked him to move out of the consulate to accommodate visitors. O'Brien felt that he had been treated with a "Great Deal of Indiferance" because "Every Servant both free and Slave is allotted a better Room in Every Respect" than the one into which he was moved. His new digs had dirty walls and eight small windows, which, to his disgust, had no glass over them. His complaints notwithstanding, O'Brien did in fact have a private room with windows—the envy of virtually all other Western slaves. In addition, he had enough clothing to stuff all eight of those windows. His inconvenience was also short-lived: he was back in his old room after only thirty days.³⁴

³⁴ O'Brien opened his "Remarks" in 1789 December after he negotiated for quarters. He sold the clothes allotted him by the Regency for "26 missoons." De Expilly kept him in the unsatisfactory room from the 20th December 1790 to 10th January 1791. O'Brien, "Remarks," 10 December 1790, 20 December 1790.

“Without the Least Distinction”³⁵

Papaluna status separated officers from their fellow slaves in many ways.

Papalunas neither lived nor worked with bagnio slaves nor did they have to spend leisure time with them. To some extent, they chose their companions whereas bagnio slaves had little control over who was appointed to their bagnio or work gang. Instead of mixing with their countrymen, American officers chose to create a small, select enclave, one that included officers, mostly from the U.S., and those of service to them.

American *papalunas* formed bonds of expediency to maximize their own comfort while awaiting redemption or to speed that redemption. They found those with rank in the Western world most helpful to them, particularly fellow officers or consuls. O’Brien associated with Logie and de Expilly, at least in part, because both could find officers housing outside of the bagnios and they could discuss redemption terms with the Dey. O’Brien’s journal mentioned consuls, in and out of Algiers, more than any other individuals, and his correspondence was addressed largely to consuls or other U.S. officials. He wrote frequently to William Short, the American chargé d’affaires in Paris; to William Carmichael, the U.S. consul in Spain; to Congress, and even to “General George Washington.”³⁶

³⁵ Samuel Calder to David Pearce, Jr., Algiers, 4 December 1793, *Naval Documents Related to the United States War with the Barbary Powers*, vol. 1 (Office of Naval Records: Washington Printing Office, 1959), 57.

³⁶ O’Brien “Wrote a Mournful letter to William Carmichael” and to General Washington “over the price of ransom.” O’Brien, “Remarks,” 13 March 1791, 18 January 1791.

O'Brien also communicated with enslaved Americans, including men from both ships captured in 1785, the *Dauphin* and the *Maria*. He and Isaac Stephens, captain of the *Maria*, stayed in close contact. When first captured, they both served in Logie's house, which put them in close physical proximity. As the captains of the two captured American ships, they would have seen each other as social equals. Stephens worked in the Dey's palace by 1790, and served as an important conduit of information for O'Brien and other *papalunas* about palace comings and goings, particularly those related to American redemption.

O'Brien interacted more selectively with his crew. He most often mentioned the first mate, Andrew Montgomery, and the second mate, Philip Sloan. Montgomery worked in the sail loft with O'Brien, which meant the two men saw each other when called to work. Sloan held the position of palace sweeper, in which capacity he supplied O'Brien with palace information. O'Brien went to some pains to communicate and see Sloan whereas he wrote few notes to or about Montgomery.

Otherwise, O'Brien noted interactions only with special cases like mariners Charles Colville and John Robertson, both of whom were redeemed by friends long before the 1796 general redemption. Mariners George Smith and James L. Cathcart, both of the *Maria*, worked in the Dey's palace; they were the only two members of that crew whom O'Brien mentioned. Smith, like Colville and Robertson, was ransomed by friends prior to 1796. Cathcart held administrative positions within the Algerian government.

He not only passed information to other enslaved Americans, but also could directly influence slaves' living conditions and status.³⁷

Based on the strict hierarchy that separated officers and mariners at sea, the enslaved Americans probably did not expect fraternization between the two groups in Algiers. In fact, the men accepted that officers would be treated differently as a matter of course. Still, O'Brien did associate with mariners, as long as they were palace-placed mariners or redeemed early. In other words, he mingled with those who might help him.

In their defense, O'Brien and other *papalunas* had limited opportunities to interact with bagnio slaves. Bagnio slaves toiled all day and were locked in a bagnio nightly, making them inaccessible to *papalunas* most of the time. Mate Sloan and mariner Smith both reported to the palace, so they had some free time during the day during which they could meet with O'Brien. In July 1790, O'Brien received a typical note from "George [Smith] and [Philip] Sloan;" they wished to meet with him "on Friday morning." Bagnio slaves did not have this luxury.³⁸

³⁷ O'Brien's crew had unusually good luck in getting out of Algiers before the 1796 general redemption. Five of the fifteen on the *Dauphin* were released early. On the downside, eight died in Algerian slavery. Colville was redeemed by Scottish friends in 1790, Robertson in 1791 by American friends, and Smith in 1793. As palace sweeper, Sloan was freed when Algiers signed a treaty with the Dutch in 1794. Prior to 1792, Smith was the Dey's *capo de golfo*; the person in this position was also redeemed when Algiers made peace with a European country. This would have been Smith, according to Cathcart, had Smith "remained in that Dishonourable Birth [*sic*]." Cathcart, *Captives*, 14.

³⁸ Sloan had "something of consequence to Relate" to O'Brien. O'Brien's journal includes multiple mentions of letters between O'Brien and Cathcart and O'Brien and Smith and Sloan. O'Brien, "Remarks," 7 July 1790.

If physical distance kept officers from reaching out to mariners, then work in the sail loft gave both parties some access to each other. The sail loft was located in the marine area where most bagnio slaves worked, and even *papalunas* did physical labor with bagnio slaves from time to time. When the magazine collapsed, for example, all Western slaves cleaned and repaired the building, “even those slaves which paid by the month...with exception of two or three from each consuls [*sic*] house.”³⁹ Officers’ presence in the marine did not mean they could mingle with mariners, however. Neither group could stop their work to visit each other across the marine area.

Elite slaves had free time while bagnio slaves had little, and when they did have it, they were consigned to their bagnios. *Papalunas* and palace-assigned slaves had time to call their own, often during the day when bagnio slaves were hard at work. They used the time to visit each other and others in Algiers. In July 1790, O’Brien and Stephens called on Algerian businessman Abraham Bushara because he had information about the Americans’ ransom. Cathcart and O’Brien spent an evening in the Spanish gardens, about three miles outside of Algiers, walking and “playing at bowls.”⁴⁰

Papalunas also used their time to correspond with each other. Though O’Brien wrote Smith in the Dey’s palace most frequently, he exchanged a few letters with his crewmen in the bagnios. Though an elite slave, Cathcart bunked in a bagnio, but he and

³⁹ Cathcart, *Captives*, 76.

⁴⁰ O’Brien, “Remarks,” 7 July 1790; James L. Cathcart, *Journal Commencing January 1st 1792, 9 July 1792*, Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

O'Brien kept in touch. Algerians did not restrict communications into or out of the bagnios, so lack of contact among elite and bagnio slaves seems to have been by choice.⁴¹

The line separating officers from mariners, though sometimes crossed, remained largely intact. This was the case even in 1793 when the number of slaves dramatically increased. In 1785, twenty-one Americans were enslaved in Algiers. By 1793, only ten of those captured in 1785 were still enslaved. Approximately half of those ten were officers. Despite their equal numbers, a gulf divided officers from mariners. With the 1793 new captures, Americans numbered about one hundred and twenty men, but the demographics had shifted. Instead of roughly equal numbers of officers and mariners, thirty-two of the enslaved Americans (or 27%) were officers—mates or captains—while 88 (or 73%) were mariners.⁴²

The newly captured Americans neither coalesced as a group nor did they blend in with the already-present American slaves. Perhaps their allowance from the American government distanced earlier-captured Americans from them. Their allowance saved the newcomers from experiencing “the hardships that we did,” as the envious Cathcart put it. Their money procured them clothing, bread, and better sleeping quarters. Cathcart felt

⁴¹ For example, O'Brien addressed a note to Cathcart at the “Bagnio Montengo” on July 16, 1793. O'Brien wrote a letter to George Smith in the Dey's Palace on December 1st, 1790, and sent a “letter and instructions to George Smith and Sloan Deys Pallace” on May 7, 1790. Cathcart, 16 July 1793, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1785-1794, New York Public Library; O'Brien, “Remarks,” 7 May 1790, 1 December 1790.

⁴² Percentages are my calculations. Captain William Penrose to his Philadelphia owner, Algiers, 4 November 1793, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 5, 1794; John McShane to his owners, dated Algiers, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 13th of November 1793, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 5, 1794.

they had “a superfluity of every thing.” With their allowance, they “could bribe the Guardians or slave drivers which always procured them rest from labour.” Interestingly, the allowance was distributed in a way that hindered even the 1793 captures from feeling a sense of togetherness. The allowance privileged rank: captains received eight Spanish dollars, mates six, and the rest three.⁴³

Like those captured in 1785, the new slaves wanted to secure their own comfort or redemption, and officers did so most successfully. Initially, the officers half-heartedly included seamen in their petitions to the House and Senate asking for funds for a house for masters, mates, and, “if possible, the mariners.” They needed the house, they explained, because “your unfortunate countrymen are confined during the night time, in slave prisons, with six hundred captives of other nations.” Because of this crowding, “we must be exposed to this contagious disorder [the plague].” Once funds arrived from the U.S. government, the captains arranged their removal from the bagnio to a house, leaving the mariners in the pest-ridden bagnios and at hard labor in the marine.⁴⁴

This status-based division rankled Cathcart, who had been an ordinary seaman. He had been delighted to see newly captured Americans who were initially “all at work

⁴³ James L. Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 152-153; Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Suffering*, 122-123. The Swedish consul sent 100 Algerian sequins to be divided among the new captives. Robert Montgomery to David Humphreys, 1 December 1793, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 56.

⁴⁴ The petition of December 29, 1793, was signed by Richard O’Brien, Isaac Stephens, James Taylor, William Wallace, Samuel Calder, William Penrose, Timothy Newman, Moses Morse, Joseph Ingraham, Michael Smith, William Furnass, John Burnham and John McShane—all of whom were captains. Carey, *A Short History of Algiers*, 41-2, 87. Cathcart, *Captives*, 18.

together” in the marine with no “distinctions between officers and seamen.” He reveled in the democratizing effects of Algerian slavery, celebrating that they were “now all slaves alike.” Like Cathcart, Captain Samuel Calder noted the initial lack of distinction between slaves, mentioning that they were all put in chains “without the least distinction and put to hard labor.”⁴⁵ Calder did not celebrate the leveling effect of slavery; rather, he seemed upset by it. He believed special treatment “due” his rank, and did not expect any democratization in Algerian slavery.

Cathcart enthusiastically described the mix of men laboring in the marine. He had seen “upwards of 60 Christian Slaves,” including “merchants, Doctors, priests and play actors with a number of other characters blowing the bellows there together and bewailing their misfortunes in concert.” Cathcart observed this joyful scene of equality as a supervisor, not a fellow laborer. He had a stake in smoothing pre-existing social inequalities. As a mariner, he would then be equal to American captains. Even better, he outranked them in Algiers due to his advanced slave rank. Though Cathcart eloquently described equality in the marine, he felt no compunction about enjoying privileges accompanying his Algerian rank: a private room, money, property, and release from manual labor.⁴⁶

Compared to the bulk of Western slaves in Algiers, *papalunas* had little about which to complain. When O’Brien wrote Carmichael that his “Brother Sufferers in the Marine is Truly Miserable,” O’Brien himself lived relatively well with de Expilly. He

⁴⁵ Samuel Calder to David Pearce, Jr., *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 57.

⁴⁶ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 152, 86-87.

had money enough to feed and cloth himself. Meanwhile, his “Brother Sufferers” had too little food considering the “Severities of their work,” and were not clothed “to Endure the Inclemency of the winter.” “One half Starved and two thirds naked,” they toiled under the lash of overseers who paid “no Respect...to persons.” Thus mistreated and far from friends, family, and country, they worked with “A Bitter Tier [*sic*] Rolling from their Eyes.”⁴⁷ Similarly separated from their friends, families, and country, *papalunas*’ tears, ameliorated by their purchased privileges, were perhaps less bitter.

Papalunas were securely held by the Algerians, yet cost the Regency nothing. In fact, the Regency made money from them, from their monthly payments and their redemption fees. By letting officers to buy their ease away from the bagnios and the mariners there, the Regency perpetuated and reinforced pre-existing socio-economic divisions among enslaved Westerners. Had they been put in bagnios, the officers might have agitated and even united in order to escape the conditions bagnio slaves endured. Worse, they might have made common cause with mariners, and revolted, escaped, or plotted to do so. *Papaluna* status kept officers under Algerian control with a minimum of expense or effort and distracted officers from making common cause with their “Brother Sufferers.”

⁴⁷ To O’Brien’s credit, he followed his description of bagnio slaves’ existence with an inquiry about money being advanced to mariners. O’Brien to William Carmichael at Madrid, “Remarks,” 19 February 1790.

“Obliged to Work Although in a Different Line as...Themselves.”⁴⁸

James L. Cathcart experienced Algerian slavery in a way few other Westerners did. Though a mariner, he escaped work in the marine, and he had a spacious, private suite of rooms in a bagnio. During his eleven years in Algiers, he steadily climbed the Western slave job ladder, picking up money and privileges with each new position. By 1794, he had gone from the “lowest pitch of degradation to the highest post that a Christian can acquire” when he was appointed Christian Secretary to the Dey.⁴⁹ The Christian Secretary acted as the Dey’s personal assistant in matters related to the Western powers, which included keeping records related to Western slaves. The position came with a bagnio tavern, better quarters, and more control over one’s time.

By 1794, Cathcart had accumulated enough cash that he owned three taverns in addition to the one he got as Christian Secretary to the Dey. The money earned in his taverns and tips from his jobs helped him live comfortably, and, he argued, permitted him to help fellow American slaves. His decision to serve in the Algerian bureaucracy, to participate in his master’s system, affected his place in the Western slave community. His power, limited though it was, within Algiers did not mean his brother sufferers accepted or respected him. After redemption, however, he won consular posts, which seemed beyond the reach of a mere mariner and indicates that some American officials

⁴⁸ Cathcart, *Account Captivity*, 166.

⁴⁹ Cathcart spent at least two days in the marine as punishment for a fight that took place in one of the taverns that he owned; he was not involved in the fight, but the Dey held the tavern keeper responsible. Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 138-139.

respected his Algerian experience. While enslaved, Cathcart's roles in the Algerian bureaucracy colored his interactions with Western, especially American, slaves.⁵⁰

Cathcart's brother sufferers realized how much his enslavement differed from theirs. Perhaps for them, and for those familiar with North American slavery, referring to Cathcart as a "slave" may seem strange. Since he possessed some power and wealth and held administrative posts, he fits uneasily within the usual association of slaves with the "lower end of social existence." In the Islamic world, however, a slave might "rise to the most powerful positions in a kingdom, commanding vast armies and powerful ministries." In fact, elite slaves were "ubiquitous" in the Islamic world over time.⁵¹ Between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries, those selected by Ottoman officials for the *devshirme* physically and mentally represented the best. They were educated

⁵⁰ As Clerk of the Bagnio Gallera, Cathcart got a tavern and in 1788 he bought the Mad House Tavern, which was also in a bagnio. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 136.

⁵¹ Ehud R. Toledano, "Representing the Slave's Body in Ottoman Society," *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 2 (August, 2002): 51; Sato Tsugitaka, "Slave Elites in Islamic History," in Miura Tora and John Edward Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 2000), ix; Dror Ze'evi, "My Slave, My Son, My Lord: Slavery, Family, and State in the Islamic Middle East," in Tora and Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa*, 71. See also Godfrey Godwin, *The Janissaries* (London: Safi Books, 1994), 10, 32-33; Y. Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800-1909* (London: Macmillan with St. Antony's College, 1996), 2-9; Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 4-9; Halil Inalcik, "Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire," in Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, and Bela K. Király (eds.) *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The Eastern European Pattern* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 25-26; Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 4; Toledano, "Late Ottoman Concepts of Slavery," *Poetics Today* 14, no. 3 (Autumn, 1993): 480; Virginia H. Askan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," *Journal of Early Modern History* [Netherlands] 3, no. 2 (1999): 103-134.

rigorously and then promoted to the highest military-administrative posts in the Empire. Though slaves themselves, they could own property, including slaves, “hold state offices, and fully engage in the political, economic, and cultural life of Ottoman society.”⁵²

Though nothing equivalent to the *kul* system existed in North America, the Algerian system of Western enslavement bore more similarities to the *kul* system than to North American slavery. Like Ottoman *devshirme* slaves, enslaved Westerners in Algiers could fill elite government positions and amass wealth. Unlike *devshirme* men, however, these enslaved Westerners filled only less exalted administrative roles. Further, enslaved Westerners expected eventual redemption and release from their slave status whereas *kul* slaves were enslaved for their lifetime.⁵³

James L. Cathcart pursued material and social advancement within the Algerian system. American society offered few opportunities for a young, uneducated mariner, but Algerians provided a few openings for men who chose to climb their system. He embraced these opportunities, and this, paired with “consistent good luck,” helped him

⁵² Despite the fact that Islamic law treated all slaves as one category, slaves filled a variety of roles within the Ottoman Empire, and slavery there was not a “coherent social phenomenon.” Toledano, “Concept of Slavery,” 170-171; Toledano, *Slavery Late Ottoman*, 279; Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in Ottoman Empire*, 13; Godwin, *The Janissaries*, 35; Kunt, “Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity,” 233. For example, Cafer Ağa, the Chief White Eunuch at Topkapi, owned 156 slaves; he died in 1557. Alan Fisher, “Chattel Slavery in the Ottoman Empire,” *Slavery and Abolition* 1, no. 1 (May 1980): 34.

⁵³ Because they wished their sons to join the Ottoman elite, Muslims sometimes bribed officials to take their boys in the *devshirme*. Godwin, *The Janissaries*, 35; Ze’evi, “My Slave, My Son, My Lord,” 74; Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Empire*, 4.

succeed.⁵⁴ Captured at seventeen, Cathcart was roughly the age of those taken in the *devshirme*. Though not rigorously trained in Algiers, he apprenticed in administrative posts prior to being appointed Christian Secretary to the Dey. Certainly he was ambitious, and this likely brought him to the attention of Algerian leaders. He consciously and carefully sought to make his fortune while enslaved. He gambled that succeeding in Algiers might translate into a consular post with the U.S. government once he was freed.

While Cathcart desired Algerian posts, he feared that fellow slaves and countrymen might resent him working so closely with Algerians. Other elite slaves shared this fear. For example, Filippo Pananti had mixed emotions when the Rais who captured him appointed him translator. He might be able to influence the Rais in ways that helped other enslaved Westerners in this post. However, he felt uneasy about the “impression which [his] temporary elevation, and apparent familiarity with the Algerian commander, might have made” if it were reported to his friends at home.⁵⁵

Pananti and Cathcart were stuck between their own countrymen and the Algerians whom they served. Ottoman *kul* slaves were folded into Ottoman structure and society, but Algerians did not seek to integrate Western slaves into Algerian society. Even if Western slaves held important posts, they remained outsiders. Of course, Western slaves generally did not wish to join Algerian society. Instead, they wanted to improve their status and comfort, but stay firmly loyal to their country while doing so. If Western

⁵⁴ Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 93.

⁵⁵ Pananti, *Narrative of Residence*, 52.

slaves “turned Turk,” that is, converted to Islam, they committed to live in Muslim lands. Most wanted to be ransomed and return home, and, therefore, clung to national and religious beliefs associated with their own country.

Cathcart’s in-between status resembled that of North American domestic slaves who found themselves torn between their master and fellow slaves. While house servants did “not so much stand between two cultures as they remained suspended between two politics,” Algerian elite slaves like Cathcart stood between both cultures and politics. The Algerian system was more inclusive than the American one, but enslaved Westerners had to “turn Turk” in order to be truly included in Algerian society. This applied to *kul* slaves, as well; they converted before joining the Ottoman elite. Conversely, there was nothing African American slaves in North America could do to be accepted by their masters as social equals.⁵⁶

Like Pananti, Cathcart worried that his fellow slaves and those at home would interpret his Algerian service as a selfish sell-out. For this reason, he presented his Algerian service carefully in his written accounts. First, he argued that his native intelligence and good character brought him to Algerian attention. Secondly, he posited, as Pananti had, that he climbed in order to aid his fellow slaves rather than to achieve personal gain.

⁵⁶ Self-hired slaves and slave artisans were similarly caught between master and slaves. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 364-365; S. Max Edelson, “Affiliation without Affinity: Skilled Slaves in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina,” in Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (eds.), *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina’s Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 217-218.

When captured in 1785, Cathcart was fortuitously assigned to the palace garden with one other American. They toiled with twelve other Western slaves under a Maltese head gardener, presumably also a slave. From this first assignment, though he interacted daily with his fellow slaves, Cathcart mentioned his work mates only briefly. He dwelt far more on the Dey's two chamberlains who oversaw all Western palace slaves. An unfortunate side effect of working as a common palace laborer was close proximity to supervisors like these chamberlains. They delighted in harassing Western slaves, including, according to Cathcart, bastinadoing slaves for mere caprices.⁵⁷

Cathcart explained that he did not try to curry the chamberlains' favor, but that they respected—and resented—his intelligence. One chamberlain, Ciddi Mahomet, wished to enlist Cathcart's learned aid in pursuit of his pet hobby, alchemy. Cathcart spurned Mahomet, despite the fact that “with a little address I might have converted this alchymist from being my inveterate enemy to my temporary friend.” Why would Cathcart take such a strong stance? To do otherwise, he wrote, would be at the “small price of my conscience.” More realistically, he added, “the truth is I dispised him and my vanity would not permit me to temporize with a person of his character...”⁵⁸ For Cathcart, showing that he refused to make common cause with his overseers indicated his upstanding American moral character and his commitment to his fellow slaves.

⁵⁷ Two of Cathcart's *Maria* crewmates reported as “upper servants” in the palace, and one to the Dey's kitchen. Cathcart thought the lad assigned to the garden with him none too bright. Cathcart, *Captives*, 12; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 29-30.

⁵⁸ Cathcart, *Captives*, 29.

His tenacious unwillingness to ingratiate himself garnered the ire of both chamberlains, and their treatment of him caused other slaves to choose sides. Only months after he arrived in the palace garden, the chamberlains forbade Cathcart to read or write, and to speak “to any of my countrymen who were stationed in the palace.” Cathcart believed the chamberlains isolated him because, while he refused to aid them, he taught fellow slaves practical navigation.

The chamberlains continued driving wedges between Cathcart and his fellow slaves, and, despite Cathcart’s avowed service to his fellows, some joined the chamberlains in ridiculing him. For example, Cathcart’s penchant for borrowing books earned him the moniker “false priest” from the chamberlains. The “lower class” of slaves “to ingratiate them selves with their superiors generally imitated them” in using this nickname.⁵⁹

In Cathcart’s recollection, the chamberlains served as a counterpoint to his behavior. Both chamberlains were “base enough to renege the Faith of their fathers,” having converted from Greek Orthodoxy to Islam. Their change of religion signified to Cathcart their acceptance of Algerian ways. Cathcart, on the other hand, refused to consider converting to what he saw as superstitious religions: Greek Orthodoxy, Islam or Catholicism.

Cathcart wrote that the men “turned Turk” to make up for their “ignorance” and “hypocrisy.” Meanwhile, Cathcart possessed an intelligence they wished to employ for their ends. Cathcart desired to educate only his fellows, and, later, to aid them, especially

⁵⁹ Cathcart, *Captives*, 14, 22; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 29-30, 33.

his countrymen, with food and special status. The chamberlains capriciously mistreated slaves and tried to turn slaves on one another. Cathcart, who later became part of the Algerian system, used this comparison to distinguish himself from those who slavishly and stupidly bought into Algerian ways. He emphasized that he played into the system only to help his countrymen, not because of misguided religious beliefs or to better integrate himself into the Algerian system more fully.

Instead of spending time with his fellow sufferers, however, Cathcart created a community composed primarily of other elite Western slaves and, to some extent, his captors. Considering his proximity to other palace and administrative slaves and Algerians, this made sense. Initially, Cathcart worked in the palace and then as a carpenter in Algerian grandees' houses, not in the marine with most of his crewmates. As Chief Christian Secretary to the Dey, he spent many hours working with those in the palace, including the Dey. He spent little time in the bagnios with his fellows.

In 1786, Cathcart escaped the chamberlains and palace when he was moved to the Bagnio Beylique and assigned carpentry work. In the bagnio, Cathcart went out of his way to secure his own comfort and to position himself for subsequent promotion. Not satisfied with his assigned bagnio, for example, Cathcart bribed the guardians to send him to the Bagnio Gallera. Most Americans lived here, as did "the most respectable prisoners." He may sincerely have wished to join fellow Americans, though only a handful of American mariners were there. The officers had never lived there. Cathcart

really wanted to rub elbows with the “best” slaves who resided in the Bagnio Gallera, in the hopes he might arrange better living conditions for himself.⁶⁰

While in Bagnio Gallera, Cathcart forged a select and transnational coterie of comrades. He especially cultivated two Leghornese acquaintances he had known in Boston, Angiolo D’Andreis and Giovanni de la Cruz. D’Andreis, whom Cathcart considered “at least half an American” because he had married a Boston woman, was captured in 1786 while serving as supercargo on a ship flying a Tuscan flag. Cathcart also knew de la Cruz in Boston; in fact, de la Cruz was chief mate of a Leghornese ship anchored in Boston when Cathcart sailed on the *Maria*.

Cathcart’s acquaintance with D’Andreis in Boston explained, he wrote, the “greater intimacy...between us during our captivity.” Indeed, his previous ties to both men were fortuitous, as was their capture during Cathcart’s stay and their service in key Algerian positions. His connections to these men helped him a great deal in terms of living quarters and facilitating his getting Algerian positions.⁶¹

Connections to high-ranking American men did not have similar positive effects in Algiers, possibly because they held onto rank that preceded their captures rather than embracing Algerian opportunities. Captains like O’Brien and Stephens held themselves aloof from the Algerian hierarchy, withdrawing into an enclave of American captains and

⁶⁰ Cathcart was moved when new “recruits” from a Russian and Leghornese prize replaced him and others in the palace. Cathcart bribed the guardians with two dollars of the eight he had at the time. Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 127; Cathcart, *Captives*, 31, 115.

⁶¹ Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 156; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 132.

mates. Ensconced in separate housing, officers no doubt saw sailors like Cathcart as cut from a different or lesser quality cloth than their own. They did little to aid mariners, particularly in a material sense. They neither shared their greater pay nor opened their house to mariners.

Meanwhile, Cathcart's connections to the Leghornese men paid off immediately. In 1787, Giovanni de la Cruz acted as Clerk of the Marine. This position came with a free private room in the Bagnio Gallera, which de la Cruz shared gratis with Cathcart.⁶² At about this time, Cathcart began moving up the Algerian slave hierarchy. In 1787, he was appointed *cofeegi*, or coffee server, to the *Vikilhadge*, or Secretary, of the Marine. By custom, tips were expected from those he served, and it was possible for *cofeegis* to earn a great deal in tips each year. Cathcart surely shared this bounty with de la Cruz in return for the use of his rooms.

Money was not the only benefit of this promotion. In addition to "some emolument," he was well fed, had Fridays to himself, and was subject only to the orders of the *Vikilhadge*. *Cofeegis* also "superintended other slaves," probably the *Vikilhadge's* six or eight other Western slaves. Cathcart handed out oil and bread to the slaves, and was "obliged to report" the slaves he supervised if they behaved badly, a duty he did not appear to find onerous.⁶³

⁶² Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 132.

⁶³ *Cofeegi* or *qahwaji*. As Clerk of the Bagnio, Cathcart also controlled aspects of his fellow slaves' lives. He mustered the slaves at night in the bagnio and had their bread served to them, and he reported each slave who was sick, dead, or missing. He was Clerk of the Bagnio Gallera from 1788 to 1791. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 90; Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 132, 134.

Cathcart's Leghornese connections continued to aid his Algerian progress. Cathcart took over the marine books for de la Cruz when he became ill. When de la Cruz died of the plague, Cathcart was officially installed as the new Clerk of the Marine, which was one of the higher posts open to Western slaves in Algiers. His other Leghornese friend, D'Andreis, held the highest post, Chief Christian Secretary to the Dey. It was from him that Cathcart "obtained the greatest part of information" from the palace, and then passed it on to O'Brien and other American slaves. Cathcart's acquaintance with this man paid off in another crucial way: when D'Andreis was redeemed by the 1794 Dutch peace treaty, Cathcart was appointed to his post.⁶⁴

Cathcart carefully explained that this promotion was not merely due to his friendship to the former Secretary or *Vikilhadge* of the Marine, who had become Dey. Cathcart believed he had impressed the Dey in his previous positions, such as Clerk of the Bagnio Gallera. The Dey, recorded Cathcart, felt he was simply the best Western slave for the job. Cathcart, in other words, argued that the Dey could not help but recognize his intelligence and potential. Of course, it helped that the Dey in 1794 had been the *Vikilhadge* or Secretary of the Marine when Cathcart was Clerk of the Marine. Cathcart had evidently established a good relationship with the current Dey while serving him in the marine.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ D'Andreis married Sarah Moody of Boston, whom he met at Thomas Russell's house on Summer Street in Boston. Russell owned the ship D'Andreis captained when captured by the Algerians. Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 132, 134, 155-156; Cathcart, *Captives*, 120-121.

⁶⁵ "Diplomatic Journal," AAS, 327.

To occupy this most-coveted of posts, Cathcart had to call in favors from several well-placed supporters. Since the Chief Christian Secretary to the Dey was automatically freed when the Dey made peace with any nation, whoever filled this post had to pay an up front fee that offset the cost of eventual redemption. The Dey himself loaned Cathcart part of the required fee, while the Swedish consul and his brother supplied the rest.⁶⁶ Cathcart succeeded in building networks with well-placed people who could aid him in very material ways.

Cathcart chose to associate with slaves who held elite positions to which he aspired and with Algerians in powerful positions. He was assisted by his Leghornese friends. De la Cruz, for example, may have recommended Cathcart for the *Vikilhadge* of the Marine's clerk in 1787. Recurring redemptions and the plague, both of which thinned the Western slave population in the 1780s and 1790s also aided Cathcart. De la Cruz became Clerk of the Marine when the post was vacated by a general Neapolitan redemption. Cathcart was appointed Clerk of the Bagnio Gallera only after three clerks died of the plague in less than one month.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Cathcart procured \$5,000 from the Swedish consul, which allowed him to purchase a prize loaded with wine "on which I made good speculation." So good, in fact, that he subsequently purchased the whole ship. Cathcart, *Captives*, 157.

⁶⁷ The plague hit Algiers hard in 1792 and recurred into the 1820s after that. According to Cathcart, the plague "took away 800 of 2,000 slaves" in 1793. Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs*, 305-309; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 134; Samuel Calder to David Pearce, Jr., quoted in H. G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War 1785-1797* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 108; Calder to Pearce, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 57.

Luck and determination both played a role in Cathcart's ascension. Chosen by the Dey to work in the palace when captured, Cathcart may have gotten tips, made connections, or learned tidbits of information that helped him move up later. He also made sure he was favorably placed for possible advances, networked with those in power, and capitalized on any perceived opportunities. His work and good fortune paid off in that he served only a few days at manual labor in the marine during his eleven years of enslavement. Cathcart passed most of those years in relative ease as an elite slave in the Algerian bureaucracy and one who squirreled away enough capital to purchase a 200 ton double deck ship in 1795.⁶⁸

“Pleased God to Have Placed Me in a Situation to Have Assisted Them”⁶⁹

Cathcart wanted to win the respect of his fellow slaves and Algerian masters. He also desired personal gain from his Algerian service, and admiration from those who saw him as selflessly supporting fellow slaves. For those reasons, he presented his promotions within the Algerian system as motivated by the desire to serve his fellow slaves, by which he meant Americans. His ever-higher positions allowed him to serve his countrymen disinterestedly. He continually claimed that he desired only to alleviate “the sufferings of my unfortunate fellow citizens.” This narrative technique distanced him from slaves who rose in Algiers because they “turned Turk,” and kept him ostensibly

⁶⁸ “Diplomatic Journal,” AAS, 363.

⁶⁹ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 137.

attached to his fellow Americans, even when he withdrew to his private quarters or engaged in work with the Dey.⁷⁰

Cathcart clearly exerted himself to move up in Algiers, but once he reached the top post of Christian Secretary of the Dey, he disavowed his maneuvering. Rather than drive and determination, he reported that God placed him in positions of power so that he could assist his countrymen. He seemingly reveled in a role that gave meaning to his enslavement. If his captivity allowed him to serve his country, he wrote, then “scorn Liberty and glory in the Chains.”⁷¹

As Secretary to the Dey, Cathcart had the “power to protect my unfortunate countrymen from the false information often threatened by the slave drivers in order to extort [*sic*] money from them.” Other enslaved Americans concurred; an American Christian Secretary would be useful to all Americans. Philip Sloan was overjoyed to hear that Cathcart would fill this position, for example. He believed, inaccurately, that an American Christian Secretary might speed the redemption of all American slaves. If he could not speed their release, Cathcart could and did assist his fellow slaves in smaller ways in this position.⁷²

⁷⁰ Cathcart had written “brother sufferers” first, but drew a line through these words, substituting “unfortunate fellow citizens.” Cathcart, *Account of my Captivity*, 55; Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 156.

⁷¹ Cathcart quoted in Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers*, 229.

⁷² Philip Sloan was second mate of the *Dauphin*, which, like the ship Cathcart was on, the *Maria*, was captured in 1785. As the palace sweeper, Sloan, like the former Christian Secretary to the Dey, had just been released because the Dutch concluded a treaty with Algiers. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 157.

When the Algerians captured eleven American ships in 1793, Cathcart embraced the opportunity his elevated position gave him to assist some of the newly captured Americans. He persuaded the Dey to transfer the officers from the Bagnio Beylique to the Bagnio Gallera. Ten of the masters roomed in Cathcart's own ample apartment, and he provided these ten with "every necessary gratis for a considerable time." The other officers were spread amongst other rooms and his tavern; the rest "were well enough off for some of them had saved money." But it is noteworthy that this former sailor catered to ranking Americans, leaving the sailors to their own devices.⁷³

Seeing that Cathcart had influence, American officers called on his philanthropic aid. Timothy Newman, master of the *Thomas*, reminded Cathcart that when he had "an Opportunity" he should "use [his] Interest to Endeavour to get me leave from the Marine." If Cathcart would agitate on his behalf, Newman would "ever feel myself under the greatest Obligations" to him. Cathcart not only saved this note, but he also meticulously recorded on the reverse his success. He had "Immediately applied to the Dey," and obtained *papaluna* status for Newman, "that is to go where he pleased in the town and pay half a sequin each lunar month."⁷⁴

⁷³ Sloan was free, but in the palace, and was the first to get word of Cathcart's promotion. Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 137, 152, 157; unsigned subscribers note in Cathcart's papers detailing the care he took of fellow Americans, Cathcart Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1798-99, New-York Public Library.

⁷⁴ *Papalunas* were released from work as long as they paid the required fee. Cathcart figured that half a sequin equaled about ninety cents, which was the amount *papalunas* paid per lunar month. Note addressed to Cathcart in "Bagnio Galereo Saturday evening," Cathcart Family Papers, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1795, New-York Public Library.

Having ascended to an exalted position in Algiers, Cathcart began to collect evidence that he rose in power and wealth to help others. He kept letters officers wrote requesting his help, and he argued in his journal that he even aided mariners in the bagnios.⁷⁵ His taverns, he wrote, gave him access to food and space, which he shared with fellow Americans. Cathcart delegated the running of his taverns to other Western slaves—he does not mention if they were Americans or not—who made “a great deal more money” than he did, thereby allowing those slaves to support themselves. Even so, Cathcart “had profit sufficient for my purposes,” so he could “serve the ...wants of my unfortunate fellow sufferers taken in 1785 who had been a great part of the time without any assistance whatever from their Country.” He continued: “And had it not pleased God to have placed me in a situation to have assisted them they would certainly have been much worse off.” Although his taverns undeniably gave Cathcart a steady income, only after his own needs were seen to did he selectively help his “brother sufferers.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Letters from mariners do not appear in his papers, though at least some of the mariners were literate. For example, Cathcart and Foss could read and write prior to their capture; in fact, Foss claimed he wrote nightly in his journal to amuse himself. Perhaps Cathcart had no letters from mariners because mariners spoke to him directly rather than writing to him. This seems especially likely for mariners living in the same bagnio as Cathcart. On the other hand, mariners may have made no or few requests, realizing such arrangements would not have been permitted for them. Or Cathcart may not have bothered saving notes mere mariners wrote to him. For literacy among sailors, see Hester Blum, “Pirated Tars, Piratical Texts: Barbary Captivity and American Sea Narratives,” *Early American Studies* (Fall 2003): 142-143.

⁷⁶ As Clerk of the Bagnio Gallera, he got a tavern, and by 1793, he owned Madhouse Tavern, half a tavern in the Bagnio Gallera, and third tavern in another bagnio. Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 134, 157.

Not all American slaves aided their fellows even if they had the means. Cathcart found, for instance, that Captain Isaac Stephens of the *Maria* drew money on the “Credit of Congress” after pay from the U.S. was stopped. According to Cathcart, Stephens selfishly used anything he could get, “yet he was never so generous as to assist his Poor distressed Countrymen that [sic] at work in the Marine with one asper.” In fact, Stephens had even begged “money and cloaths from some of the Oran Englishmen that belongs to Particular Houses.” Apparently Stephens’ refusal to help his fellows, but to see only to himself, aggravated Cathcart, who closed his account by damning Stephens’ “mean dirty Spirit [sic].”⁷⁷

Because of his taverns, Cathcart claimed, no Americans wanted for a good meal while “I had it in my power to give it to them.” In addition, he buried, at his own expense, several American victims of the plague. He maintained James Harnett who was in a mad house for four years and then paid for him to be buried. Even O’Brien grudgingly acknowledged Cathcart’s attentiveness in a note: “I am sensible of your attention to the Remains of our two Deceased brothers.”⁷⁸

Either through the appreciative word-of-mouth or his own self-promotion, Cathcart’s reputation as a philanthropic slave made its way to U.S. officials. Robert

⁷⁷ Cathcart, Journal Commencing January 1st, 1 January 1792.

⁷⁸ He “cloathed” and maintained James Harnett (or Harnet) for four years. Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, O’Brien to Cathcart on July 16, 1793, Cathcart, Cathcart Family Papers, Special Collections, New-York Public Library. Cathcart claimed he passed valuable information on to O’Brien, who was, since he was always in “different consuls houses and gardens,” out of the loop. Cathcart, Account of Captivity, 55; Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 156.

Montgomery, the American consul in Spain, heard from O'Brien how "friendly to the American cause in General and in particular to your unfortunate fellow slaves in Algiers" Cathcart was. Montgomery found this "goodness of heart and humane disposition" all "the more commendable" because it was "uncommon to find it so conspicuous in the generality of mankind who might from the caprice of fortune escape from a wretched state of slavery to become the favorite and useful secretary of a Prince." Montgomery heartily thanked Cathcart for his "good services and friendship to our fellow Citizens."⁷⁹

Unlike Montgomery, O'Brien held his praise in check. He simply noted Cathcart's attention to the "Remains of our two Deceased brothers." As a former captain, O'Brien may have been unhappy that Cathcart, a lowly seaman, outranked him in Algiers. Certainly, Cathcart, the elite slave, could support fellow sufferers in a way O'Brien could not. Still, O'Brien, supported by his country and contacts because of his rank, lived comfortably in Algiers, and could remain aloof from the Algerian system of Western enslavement.

Mariner Cathcart was more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of Algerian enslavement. He secured his comfort by seizing opportunities within the Algerian system. Having risen through the slave ranks, however, Cathcart found that his enslaved countrymen, and even other Western slaves, viewed him uneasily and with suspicion.

⁷⁹ As Cathcart told his story, unlike Oraner Villarexo, he was not corrupted by his enslavement and had not exploited his fellows when given power over them. Cathcart Family Papers, Robert Montgomery U.S. Consul to James Leander Cathcart, Alicante, 16 April 1795, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1795, New-York Public Library.

Cathcart worked closely with Algerian leaders, including the Dey: had he aligned himself with their Algerian masters? Had he forgotten his fellow sufferers?

Cathcart's public relations campaign responded to these concerns, arguing that, though he climbed, he was still a brother to fellow slaves and would help them whenever possible. On the other hand, some of Cathcart's entries seem oblivious to his fellow slaves' lives. He had privileges and freedoms other slaves never experienced. After spending an entire day in his rent-free bagnio apartment, which included "two handsome rooms and a kitchen," four large windows for ventilation, and a door to the terrace, Cathcart wandered down to one of the taverns he owned, the Madhouse Tavern, at three in the afternoon. He planned to eat and to provide some of "my unfortunate brother sufferers" with a meal after their long day of toil in the marine, as, he indicated, was his wont.

Undoubtedly, the slaves Cathcart fed appreciated the victuals. Most were underfed and had no money with which to supplement their diets, but they probably had trouble appreciating his attitude of self-congratulatory benevolence. They arrived in his tavern sweaty and starving, having labored in the marine since sunup. Cathcart met them well-rested and fresh, having been in his suite all day. Cathcart might have been seeking the company of his countrymen or fellow slaves in general. They were always in each other's company.

In his bid to get ahead in Algiers, Cathcart did not always act benevolently to his fellow slaves. Not loath to make a buck even at the expense of a fellow slave, Cathcart rented out his bagnio room—for which he paid nothing—during the six months he kept

Dr. Werner's accounts. He lived, free of charge, with Dr. Werner, who served as surgeon to the British factory in Algiers, during this time. Still, Cathcart charged rent on his suite of bagnio rooms while simultaneously boasting that he had "enough money to serve all his wants," which kept him independent of Werner. Very few Western slaves had this much money or the opportunity to charge rent. Nevertheless, Cathcart complained that though he was better off than "many of my fellow prisoners," the guards, knowing he had money, constantly required him to pay them bribes.⁸⁰

Cathcart did not publicize charging fellow slaves rent on his bagnio rooms though he did write extensively about anything he did to help fellow slaves. His self-aggrandizement, money-grubbing, and elite position caused other slaves to view him with suspicion, jealousy, and even rancor. This may explain what Cathcart saw as Captain Isaac Stephens' duplicitous behavior. The "perfidious Stephens" reported all of Cathcart's comments, most of which were negative, about Dr. Werner and his wife directly to Dr. Werner. Naturally, hearing what Cathcart really thought of his hosts put both his residence with them and connection to them in jeopardy.

What ostensibly bothered Cathcart about Stephens' behavior, however, was that Stephens, in Cathcart's opinion, betrayed a fellow American slave. Cathcart, "being naturally unsuspicious," never "Suspected that Stephens could be such a Villian incarnate [*sic*] as to betray a brother sufferer." Worse, Stephens betrayed "one who has never offended him, but on the contrary, tried to serve him on every occasion that lay in

⁸⁰ Cathcart, *Journal Commencing January 1st 1792*, 8 July 1792; Cathcart, *Captives*, 123, 59, 55. Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 138, 144.

his power.” Cathcart’s response suggests he at least imagined a unified enslaved American community, a community that his elite positions and privileges challenged. Cathcart seemed blind to what his positions and privileges might have meant to his fellow sufferers, and what they believed he might have done for them yet did not do.⁸¹

Cathcart’s rise in North Africa provoked mixed feelings in other American slaves. His money, possessions, and perks, not to mention his supervision of fellow slaves, caused some tension between him and other Western slaves. Other Western slaves may have coveted the positions he filled. Certainly Western slaves competed for some placements. For example, the post of *cofeegi* to the *Vikilhadge* of the Marine was considered a superior position, and “a great deal of interest” was “made to get there.”⁸²

Cathcart desired to be accepted as elite by American officers, but they drew an unequivocal boundary between themselves and Cathcart. For example, Stephens blocked Cathcart’s bid to live with the American officers in their country house, which would have removed him from the threat of plague. In a note written from “Death’s Door,” Cathcart very ostentatiously forgave Stephens for “hindering” him “from being accommodated out of the reach of the plague.” Cathcart, believing his death imminent, warned that Stephens would one day answer to “a just God who makes no difference between the captain and the sailors.”⁸³

⁸¹ “Diplomatic Journal,” AAS, 326.

⁸² Cathcart, *Captives*, 117-118.

⁸³ This note is dated “Death’s Door Algiers,” March 2, 1793. Cathcart, *Captives*, 154.

Cathcart relished his ability to impress his captors at least in part because this ability aided his climb in Algiers. Cathcart set himself apart from other ordinary seamen. Unlike them, he was intelligent, capable, and worthy of social promotion. He implicitly compared himself to a shipmate, an ordinary seaman, who failed to perform as well as Cathcart did. This shipmate had been assigned with Cathcart to the palace garden and the Spanish carpenter; then both served the Clerk of the Marine. When Cathcart became *cofeegi*, the boy was sent to the marine where he apparently remained. Cathcart believed that this “very simple and ignorant lad...could not learn the duty” expected of him under the Secretary of the Marine. The boy was sent back to labor in the marine, while the intelligent Cathcart prospered under the Secretary.⁸⁴

Cathcart was very conscious of his own status, and he often sought to enhance his standing vis-à-vis his fellow American slaves. He wanted American officers, consuls, and statesmen, and his Algerian overlords to recognize his accomplishments. In fact, he made his Algerian accomplishments as visible to others as he could—in his journal and letters, for instance. The officers, on the other hand, did not seem to care if Americans or Algerians viewed them as competent based on their Algerian work. Their status was secure, so they did not need to impress Algerians to live relatively well.

Some of the American captains also cared what well-placed Americans thought of them, and they kept a high profile with prolific letter writing. O’Brien wrote constantly to Congress, the President, American consuls and ministers, and his business

⁸⁴ The lad may have been resisting by dissembling rather than truly being too stupid to do manual labor. Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 133.

acquaintances. Using information gleaned from Cathcart, he liberally advised American officials on how negotiations for their redemption should be carried out and who should be entrusted with such an assignment.

O'Brien's letter campaign paid off, if not in terms of speeding the Americans' redemption, at least in terms of public recognition. By 1792, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson recommended O'Brien to John Paul Jones' "particular notice." O'Brien had supplied the American government with "a great deal of useful information" already, and the "zeal which he has displayed under the trying circumstances of his present situation has been very distinguished." Jefferson pitched O'Brien as the Algerian insider and expert, noting that Jones would "find him intimately acquainted with the manner in which and characters with whom our business is to be done there."⁸⁵

Certainly, O'Brien knew the European consuls residing in Algiers, and he regularly kept in touch with the important Jewish bankers there. He did not know any of the main Algerian players though he laid claim to Cathcart's networks. During his captivity, O'Brien kept firmly within the circle of Americans and Europeans of rank—captains, mates, consuls, and merchants. He was never an Algerian "insider" as was Cathcart; in fact, none of the captains was. What information and insight the captains, including O'Brien, had into the Algerian system and personalities was delivered to them by Americans serving in the palace: George Smith, Philip Sloan, and James L. Cathcart. Before Cathcart rose to Chief Christian Secretary, his palace contacts, such as D'Andreis,

⁸⁵ John Paul Jones was initially charged with negotiating with Algiers, but died before he could leave for that country. Secretary of State to John Paul Jones, Philadelphia, 1 June 1792, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 40.

allowed him to feed information to O'Brien. O'Brien then fed this information to the American government without giving credit to his sources.⁸⁶

O'Brien, like Cathcart, drew attention to his solicitousness toward the mariners, though both were equally removed from the mariners' reality. O'Brien was not enamored of equality. He seemed content separating himself from the mariners and seeing to his own comfort before addressing their needs. Like other captains, he expected they would be taken care of in different ways than mariners, and perhaps their extra support would allow them to help mariners or to get them all released.

Though his own situation was not that dire, O'Brien used the mariners' plight and needs to pad his petitions for aid. He mentioned to Consul William Carmichael that four of the Americans were at a merchant's house, five in the Dey's palace, and one at the Swedish consul's house, but dwelt on the eleven in the marine. He explained nothing about any of the men except those in the marine "where the poor men endure the severities of slavery." In the marine, the men were "employed on the most laborious work and so much exhausted that if some speedy measure is not adopted to redeem them from slavery I am afraid they will all be carried off by the pest." Four years later, he reminded Carmichael "with the most Poignant Grief" of the "Situation of My Brother Sufferers in the Marine," which was "Truly Miserable and affecting to a Mind Endowed with

⁸⁶ George Smith was a mariner from the *Maria* and Sloan the *Dauphin's* second mate. O'Brien was freed before most Americans; he delivered dispatches to the United States from the Dey. When he arrived in the U.S., he acted as if he was an Algerian insider who knew the Dey and the ins and outs of the Regency.

Humanity.” Meanwhile, O’Brien lived in the Spanish consul’s house and worked an occasional Friday in the Sail Loft.⁸⁷

Conclusion

In America, “despite the multiplicity of different slave experiences, much more united the slaves than divided them.”⁸⁸ In Algiers, Western slaves were separated by prior social standing and different conditions of enslavement. Officers could pay a monthly fee in exchange for which they were mostly work-exempt and free of bagnio living. As *papalunas*, they controlled their own time and decided with whom to spend that time. Mariners were not given the same option, but some rose in the Algerian slave bureaucracy, and thus earned some wealth and created some comfort for themselves.

As Peter Kolchin noted, “slave community” encompassed two interrelated components. First, slave community depended on the “degree to which the slaves were able to secure control of their lives.” Secondly, slave community indicated the “degree to which, in doing so, they acted on the basis of mutuality and collective interests.”⁸⁹ The Algerian system of enslaving Westerners encouraged the first while discouraging the second. The existence of slave elites discouraged Western slaves from seeing themselves

⁸⁷ O’Brien to William Carmichael, Algiers, 13 Sept 1786, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 14; O’Brien to unspecified recipient, Algiers, 28 April 1787, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 15; Richard O’Brien to William Carmichael, Algiers, 19 February 1790, “Remarks.”

⁸⁸ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 111. No monolithic or unified slave community existed in America, either. Edelson, “Affiliation without Affinity,” 232-233; McDonnell, “Money Knows No Master,” 37-39; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “The Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South,” *American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (December 1988): 1246-1247, 1251.

⁸⁹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 149.

as sharing a condition, and prevented them from making common cause with one another. Administrative slaves and *papalunas*—controlled their own lives to a high degree, though within parameters established by the Algerian Regency. This, along with the probability of redemption, prevented slaves from seeing mutual and collective interests.

In addition, Algerian owners did not seek to control or direct their slaves' lives or have paternalistic expectations of master-slave interactions. All Western slaves in Algiers had unsupervised, undirected free time, and therefore they did not need to carve out space away from an invasive master and a de-humanizing, racial system of enslavement. Without this pressure from above, Western slaves did not need to rely on their families, religion, or economic independence as sources of “emotional comfort and solace” or control.⁹⁰

O'Brien and Cathcart used different strategies to secure their ease, and called on different social networks in doing so, but neither attempted to forge close bonds with bagnio slaves or Western slaves in general. They did not aim to act mutually or collectively. *Papalunas* retained their status as long as they paid their monthly fee, which they did with the support of their country, friends, family and business connections. They depended on Westerners, particularly consular agents, to support them since they did not earn money while in Algiers. Officers arranged to live and work with one another, if they had to work, and to spend leisure time together. They formed bonds of

⁹⁰ Larry E. Hudson, Jr., *To Have and To Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), xiv-xvi.

expediency with those who helped them survive and do so with some style, but avoided most mariners of any nationality.

Western slaves in the Algerian bureaucracy, on the other hand, earned tips and privileges from their positions. Tavern ownership accompanied some positions, and this, along with their administrative jobs, gave these elite slaves a vested interest in the Algerian system. They maintained ties with their countrymen, particularly those of rank, but also branched out to include those with whom they worked, Algerians and Western slaves in similar posts, in their networks.

Captains and mates surely could have purchased a bagnio tavern or the post of Chief Christian Secretary to the Dey, but they chose not to. Officers maintained their previously-existing status with social distance from non-countrymen and those of lower rank. They created a select enclave of American officers, European officers, and consular agents; that is, those of their rank or those who helped them keep their *papaluna* status. Cathcart, a mariner, had no reason to be limited by his former rank while in Algiers. He recognized his chance to move up in Algiers, and his Algerian promotions and connections could jump-start his career once free.

The Algerian system of Western slavery recognized slave elites and held out the very real promise of redemption, which shifted Westerners' focus to themselves—their own comfort, security, and redemption—rather than the larger community of Western slaves. Yet the Algerian system provided elite status for only a few Western slaves. Officers were the minority of enslaved Westerners. Cathcart was highly unusual among mariners; few high posts existed for Western slaves and few mariners rose to those posts.

D'Andries, the Christian Secretary before Cathcart, had been a supercargo and de la Cruz, a Clerk of the Marine, a first mate.

Westerners certainly appeared divided, and Western slaves, particularly officers, seemed willing to turn their lower-ranking countrymen over to the Algerians rather than protect them. During the redemption of Frenchmen in 1790, a French mariner insulted an Algerian notable and the Dey while boarding the boat that would whisk him away from Algiers and slavery. Although the men had been ransomed, the Dey insisted the mariner be punished. The French officers obligingly handed the mariner over to the Dey, who ordered the man bastinadoed. The crew almost rose up against the officers, but did not. Westerners, officer and mariner alike, confined themselves to playing the Algerian system, often to the detriment of mariners.⁹¹

The Algerian slave system encouraged divisions among slaves by permitting some to buy their way out of the bagnios and labor and by promoting a select few within Algiers. This system of allowing slaves to purchase privileges and recognizing slave elites ultimately helped the Algerians. *Papalunas* and slave elites had good reasons to cooperate with their Algerian masters while enslaved, and their cooperation contributed to the smooth operation of Western enslavement. *Papalunas* and slave elites utilized a strategy common to many Western slaves, self-preservation. Generally, it was every man for himself in pursuit of a comfortable captivity and speedy redemption, not a community of Western slaves or even American slaves who banded together for survival.

⁹¹ O'Brien, "Remarks," 4 March 1790.

Chapter 3

“WE SET NO GREAT VALUE UPON MONEY”:¹ A WESTERN SLAVE ECONOMY IN ALGIERS

On January 17, 1790, Captain Richard O’Brien recorded in his diary: “I was in town and Returned a Little fuddleheaded.”² Although it was hardly unusual for an eighteenth-century American man to get tipsy in town, O’Brien was an American enslaved in Algiers, which makes his drinking bout worth a second look. O’Brien patronized one of the taverns in Algiers and returned to his quarters slightly drunk, all without the interference of a master. His experience attests to the freedom of choice and movement some Western slaves had in Algiers, as well as the freedom to possess and spend money. This chapter delves into the “slave economy” in Algiers, exploring the importance of money to slaves, the extent to which enslaved Americans had access to money and markets in Algiers, and the stratification that resulted from this access.

Though slaves have been universally defined as property-less, O’Brien and other Western slaves in fact claimed ownership of their money and possessions in Algiers. This

¹ James L. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity 1785*, Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 137.

² O’Brien may have patronized one of the twenty to thirty taverns located either in the city of Algiers or in the bagnios. James Leander Cathcart, *The Captives* (LaPorte, Ind: J.B. Newkirk, [1899]), 109; Richard O’Brien, 17 January 1790, “Remarks and Observations in Algiers, 1789-1791,” Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

in itself is not unusual, as slaves possessed property in almost every slaveholding society. Usually, slave property was subject to restrictions that varied by time, place, or owner's preferences. The Algerians, however, imposed virtually no restrictions on property that Western slaves amassed, though, as in other slave systems, a slave's property officially reverted to his owner when he died. Since owners eventually acquired slaves' goods and money, owners lost little in permitting slaves to accumulate property.³

Algerian owners of Western slaves—by the late eighteenth century, almost exclusively the Algerian Regency—exhibited little of the angst expressed by American owners about their slaves' market interactions. American masters associated slaves' ability to earn money with a “dangerous degree of black self-determination” and an unacceptable level of slave autonomy. American masters feared, and often fought, slaves' economic independence such as that so casually expressed by O'Brien. Had O'Brien been owned in America, his master might have tried to prevent him from purchasing alcohol or curtailed his access to funds and the ability to purchase goods altogether.⁴

³ Though “recognition of the slave's peculium,” or property permitted a slave during his lifetime, “was very nearly universal,” how a slave could get and spend his peculium varied in degree, depending on legal and social sanctions. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1982), 182, 184-185. The Algerians confiscated the property, including most of the clothing, of those they captured. Western slaves, then, laid claim to what money and property they acquired while enslaved.

⁴ In much of America, the internal economy “provided a steady supply of alcohol” for many slaves, even if their owner forbade it. John T. Schlotterbeck, “Internal Economy of Slavery in Rural Piedmont Virginia,” in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (eds.), *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1991), 177. Loren Schweninger also discussed the ease with which

Some African American slaves did own property with the tacit, or even open, acceptance of their masters. Not protected by law, though, slaves' property was recognized only by the master's grace and customary practices. Still, enslaved African Americans accrued property and earned cash in a variety of ways, some of which their masters encouraged. Even when they gave their permission or allowed it to occur, however, masters feared that their slaves' market participation might lead to "self-reliance and defiant resourcefulness." In turn, this might "forestall dependence on the paternalist white masters," thereby threatening all of white society.⁵

Devoid of such fears, Algerian masters encouraged Western slaves to get and spend money. Algerian masters, unlike their American counterparts, did not consider

Virginia slaves purchased ardent spirits. Loren Schweninger, "The Underside of Slavery: The Internal Economy, Self-Hire, and Quasi-Freedom in Virginia, 1780-1865," *Slavery and Abolition* 12, no. 2 (Sept. 1991): 6-7; Betty Wood, "'White Economy' and the 'Informal' Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia, c. 1763-1830," *Slavery and Abolition* 11, no. 3 (December 1990): 313-314.

⁵ Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 5, 172; Larry E. Hudson, Jr., "'All That Cash': Work and Status in the Slave Quarters," in Larry E. Hudson, Jr., (ed.), *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1994), 80-82; Loren Schweninger, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790-1915* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 34-35; Schlotterbeck, "Internal Economy of Slavery," 171; Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 16, 50. See Chapter 2 in Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 45-78; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 137, 313; Lawrence T. McDonnell, "Money Knows No Master: Market Relations and the American Slave Community," in Winfred B. Moore, Jr., Joseph F. Tripp, Lyon G. Tyler, Jr., (eds.), *Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society* (New York: Greenwood, 1988), 38.

their slaves out of their control if they bought and sold goods. Algerians seemingly had no legislation designed to curb Western slaves' market interactions. Neither Western slaves nor visitors to Algiers described Algerian attempts to monitor or control their ability to make money or spend it as they chose. Rather, their testimony indicated that Western slaves were allowed to participate directly in the city's markets and economic life. They were not side-lined into a clandestine, or internal, slave market, as often happened in America.⁶

On the surface, the right to have and spend money offered Western slaves an extraordinary amount of self-determination. Like African American slaves, some Western slaves in Algiers purchased private rooms, additional food, decent clothing, and even luxuries like alcohol. Some, like O'Brien, arranged private housing and bought exemptions from work. Even bagnio slaves, those consigned to dormitories, had some hope of getting and using money while enslaved. Bagnio slaves had fewer opportunities to get money though they more desperately needed it for their survival. All Western slaves pursued whatever avenues were available, and often several simultaneously.

Several factors facilitated Western slaves' access to and use of markets in Algiers. Most helpful was their location: they were held in a city and thus had relatively easy access to markets. Since the majority of late eighteenth-century Western slaves were owned by the Regency, or Algerian state, they were all subject to the same rules. The

⁶ It would be interesting to know if Western slaves were permitted more latitude to interact in the market than were other slaves in Algiers. It is not clear if Algerians passed legislation or enacted controls on Western slaves' market interactions. See Schweninger for laws passed attempting to curb slaves' access to markets and money in America. Schweninger, "Underside of Slavery," 1; Schweninger, *Black Property Owners*, 52-53.

Regency permitted all Western slaves to visit the city's markets. While American urban slaveholders "rarely held more than a dozen slaves," and those slaves lived and worked in close proximity to their owners or other whites, most enslaved Americans in Algiers were held together. They were not closely supervised in the evenings or at night. Those enslaved in Algiers had more freedom of movement and less intervention from their owners.⁷

In addition, newly enslaved Westerners had already participated in the market as free men. Market participation did not, therefore, have the transforming effect it might have had on second and third-generation slaves in America. While slaves in America "temporarily experienced one of the central attributes of freedom, the purchase and sale of labour power and the enjoyment of its fruits"⁸ when they participated in the market, enslaved Americans had routinely done so prior to capture. No matter how young, they exercised choice in at least one market arena prior to capture: they sold their labor when they signed to the ship on which they were captured.⁹

⁷ Cities were attractive for American free blacks and slaves due to their "reputation as a place where a slave could gain freedom through self-purchase or delayed manumission in return for rendering highly productive labor," and for other reasons. T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 13; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 154-161, 179-180.

⁸ John Campbell, "As 'A Kind of Freeman'?: Slaves' Market-Related Activities in the South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860," in Berlin and Morgan, (eds.), *The Slaves' Economy*, 131.

⁹ Campbell argued that "it was during slavery...that many black people first experienced the contradictory nature of market participation." Campbell, "As 'A Kind of Freeman,'" 153, 155; Schlotterbeck, "Internal Economy of Slavery," 178.

Western slaves did not threaten the Algerian system by asserting economic independence. Instead, slaves' market participation sustained the system. In fact, the Algerian system demanded such participation. All Western slaves paid for room and board, either with their labor, as in the case of bagnio slaves, or with cash. This system of requiring Western slaves to pay for their upkeep and permitting them to purchase additional liberties had evolved over a long period of time, and proved adaptable for the Algerians.¹⁰

As early as the sixteenth century, galley slaves who paid the *gileffo*, or tariff, did not have to suffer at the oar. Such a slave was assigned work ashore, but if one could, with additional funds, pay to get out of this work as well.¹¹ The wealthiest slaves, it was said, might "set up house with their own mistresses and horses, and with ample food and drink, so they lived almost as well whilst technically still slaves as when they were free men in their own country."¹² Either setting up one's own house was not allowed in the late eighteenth century or the Algerians did not capture such wealthy men. No examples of slaves living the high life appear in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

¹⁰ Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 90-91.

¹¹ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 88.

¹² Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves* (New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1977), 42.

Like African American slaves in North America, Western slaves strove for “subsistence and independence,”¹³ but the two did not go hand in hand in Algiers. Algerian masters provided very little for them, leaving slaves to fend for themselves in Algerian markets. Western slaves’ market interactions aided the Algerians in controlling them. As will be described in this chapter, slaves’ attempts to support themselves and different levels of access to money divided them and kept them focused on their own condition, preventing them from unifying against the Algerians.

“1/2 starved and 2/3rds naked”¹⁴

In Algiers, as in other slave systems, allowing slaves title to money and property was a self-serving maneuver by masters. In America and other locations, permitting slaves plots of land freed owners from supplying all provisions for their slaves, a fact that prompted Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan to argue that “the slaves’ economy must also be studied in conjunction with the masters’ need to subsist their slaves.” Slaves in Jamaica were issued only “meager rations,” but, with family assistance, their provision grounds might yield sustenance and even surplus to sell. Similarly, the Algerian state inadequately fed and clothed, leaving slaves to provide for themselves and allowing the Regency to divert funds for purposes other than feeding, clothing and housing slaves.¹⁵

¹³ Schweninger, *Black Property*, 59.

¹⁴ O’Brien, 14 February 1790, “Remarks.”

¹⁵ Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, “Introduction,” in Berlin and Morgan, (eds.), *The Slaves’ Economy*, 3. Also see Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 358-359; Schweninger, *Black Property*, 30; McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 18. Unlike the Algerian slave economy, the

While most North American masters provided their slaves with adequate food as evinced by their slaves' relative health, many enslaved Westerners in Algiers received next to nothing.¹⁶ Though conditions had improved by the late eighteenth century, the "daily rations doled out" in the bagnio were "too meager to sustain hard physical labour." Bagnio slaves were provided with a morning loaf of bread and vinegar, a noon loaf with vinegar, and an evening loaf with no vinegar. "This," noted mariner John Foss, "is all the provisions they have allowed from the Regency." Clearly the bagnio-slave menu would not support a man for a hard day's work, but Western slaves in Algiers were not assigned provision grounds nor could they raise livestock to supplement their diets. Rather, they engaged in various strategies to feed themselves.¹⁷

American slaves' economy "was a family economy." Berlin and Morgan, "Introduction," *The Slaves' Economy*, 12-13, 15.

¹⁶ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 113-115; Richard H. Steckel, "A Peculiar Population: The Nutrition, Health, and Mortality of American Slaves from Childhood to Maturity," *The Journal of Economic History* 46, no. 3 (September 1986): 728; Robert A. Margo and Richard H. Steckel, "The Height of American Slaves: New Evidence on Slave Nutrition and Health," *Social Science History* 6, no. 4 (Autumn 1982): 519, 521-522, 534; Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 107.

¹⁷ According to Foss, each loaf weighed about 11 ounces. For comparison, provisions on Regency cruisers consisted of biscuits, oil, vinegar, olives, burgul (cracked wheat), and some butter. Corsairs could expect a hot meal every seventh day. If one wanted more or better food, one provided it for oneself. Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 60; John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport: Published According to an Act of Congress, [1798]), 27. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 92. Many historians of slavery have described provision grounds. See Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 152-153; Berlin and Morgan, "Introduction," *The Slaves' Economy*, 141-143; Schweninger, "The Underside of Slavery," 1-22; Wood, "White Economy," 313-331.

One strategy was to eat whatever was at hand. Hungry bagnio-dwellers ate rats and cats, driven to such extremes by “mere necessity.” Such was the case for a Frenchman whom Cathcart watched skin a cat. When Cathcart asked him what he planned on doing with the cat, the Frenchman “laconically” replied that he had to eat. Those in the Bagnio Gallera had a distinct advantage when it came to a rat dinner. The Dey’s animals, including lions and tigers, were housed in this bagnio, and their offal “maintain[ed] a large number of rats,” the “largest” of which “frequently serve[d] to satisfy the craving appetite of some of the poor slaves.” Slaves had access to the animals’ food though this provided a dangerous meal at best. One slave was bastinadoed 450 strokes when another claimed “he Defrauded the Lyons of their Grub.”¹⁸

Slaves in the Dey’s garden also appropriated food, though they had slightly more palatable options. They were also given better rations in terms of quantity and variety. They received a “small plate of meat,” another of rice, and a basin of “sour milk” twice a day along with oil, vinegar, black bread, and in-season fruit. Though given far more than bagnio slaves, who worked in the marine all day, they found their rations less than filling. “Slaves in the garden suffer[ed] frequently from hunger,” and longed for the garden’s fruits even though this was “kept for the Dey[’]s own use.”¹⁹

¹⁸ The Frenchman replied, “ma foi il faut manger [sic].” The Dey kept as many as twenty-seven lions and tigers in the Bagnio Gallera. Occasionally, some of the large cats broke loose and killed a few slaves, though no Americans wrote of this happening while they were enslaved. O’Brien, 17 May 1790, “Remarks;” Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 68-69. Jamaican slaves also caught rats, which they ate but also sold to their masters who were concerned with rats infesting their sugar fields. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 46.

¹⁹ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 20.

Hunger drove garden slaves to eat pilfered edibles, which were more easily at hand for them than for bagnio slaves. According to Cathcart, garden slaves were “often reduced to the necessity of making a kind of sallad” with vine leaves “to stay our craving appetites.” Perhaps more appetizing were the “depredations” they “committed...on the Dey[']s pigeon house” despite the fact they captured the birds “at the risk of breaking our necks.” Cathcart also knew “brother sufferers” to be “bastinadoed for having been detected eating an orange or a small bunch of grapes.”²⁰

Few of these options existed for their much-hungrier brethren in the bagnios, but other palace slaves could snag the Dey’s supplies more directly. Those in the palace kitchens stole for themselves, and some shared their bounty with fellow slaves. Their superior access to foodstuffs came as a trade-off. They “had more liberty,” which made “their situation...by far the most tolerable,” but they worked harder and were given less money than other slaves.²¹

The Algerians distributed better and more food to palace slaves as well as better clothing. Slaves who worked in the palace’s upper apartments were given two suits of “elegant clothes trimmed with gold,” palace garden slaves got the same with less gold, and cooks wore “somewhat inferior” suits. All were initially issued livery, but were “ever after obliged to furnish themselves with every article of apparel from the

²⁰ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 19.

²¹ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 29.

prerequisites [tips] they receive.” Their very necessary tips kept them clothed for their job.²²

Those in the bagnios, who worked without tips, were annually granted one suit of clothing. Though the clothing dispensed was better in the 1790s than previously, bagnio slaves’ clothing fell “short of what was typically given by planters in the American South to their slaves.”²³ Their suit was not worth more than “one dollar and a half,” and they had to work for it. Mariner John Foss was told that the “tedious day’s work” slaves did on January first gathering reeds for the Dey’s garden, which took them seven miles into the country, covered the expense of their yearly suit.²⁴

Papalunas, who were technically owned by the Regency, were given a suit of clothing periodically. While working in the Sail Loft, O’Brien accepted a suit like the one given bagnio slaves, which included a “Capute and shirt and waistcoat and trousers and pair of slippers.” Apparently finding the suit lacking, O’Brien sold his. Some slaves were given money to clothe themselves from the start. Cathcart remembered being given two pieces of cotton “each sufficient to make two jackets and two pair of trowsers” while

²² Cathcart, *Extracts from my Journal*, 129-130; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 56; Cathcart, *Captives*, 18.

²³ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 107.

²⁴ On December 31, 1790, O’Brien noted that all the slaves were sent out 3 leagues to cut “cains for bylic gardens.” Foss described their annual outfit as “a *capoot* (which is sort of a jacket with a head),” waistcoat, shirt, trousers, and a pair of slippers. Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 19, 30; O’Brien, 31 December 1790, “Remarks.”

assigned to the *Vikilhadge*, or Secretary, of the Marine, along with “sufficient money to pay for making them.”²⁵

Slaves’ clothing visually reflected the slave hierarchy, based in part on rank pre-dating capture and in part on status gained while enslaved. Palace slaves’ costumes indicated their place in a labor hierarchy imposed by the Algerians while *papalunas*, who clothed themselves with money gleaned from different sources, purchased European dress familiar to them prior to enslavement. Both palace slaves’ and *papalunas*’ outfits “clearly distinguished them from run-of-the-mill working slaves.” Those bagnio slaves wore a “distinctive slave garb” issued to them. Some had money enough to add to their annual outfit, but most probably could not afford to change it substantially.²⁶

In the absence of provision grounds, Algerian slaves relied on cash to purchase their victuals, attire, and other necessities. The Regency not only allowed slaves to purchase such things, but, by their under-provisioning, required them to do so. By providing for slaves differently, the Algerians encouraged their slaves to compete for rewards and privileges like clothing and food. As they did in America, these rewards “shored up plantation labor hierarchy.”²⁷ Still, money to buy extra food transformed a

²⁵ O’Brien, 10 December 1790, “Remarks;” Cathcart, Extract from My Journal, 129-130.

²⁶ Bagnio slaves were not issued a full outfit until the 1720s. Slaves were “extremely unwilling to dress like Turks” because such dress indicated that one had “turned Turk.” Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 105-107.

²⁷ S. Max Edelson, “Affiliation without Affinity: Skilled Slaves in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina,” in Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (eds.), *Money, Trade and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina’s Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 232, 238.

slave's condition. Some slaves were better able to transform their situation, depending on their place in the Algerian system.²⁸

“Maintained from the Dey’s own table”²⁹

Most Western slaves in Algiers had some opportunity to buy and sell, but, as in North America, some slaves had more access to money than others and standards of living varied greatly. The disparities of wealth created slave stratifications similar to that in the United States, where the “divisive effect independent economic production had on their community” could be seen. In America, however, “social divisions among slaves...remained limited” though “visible social and economic distinctions” did exist. Differences in slave status and wealth led to greater social stratification in Algiers.³⁰

Work and status separated Algerian slaves into three basic groups: *papalunas*, bagnio slaves, and palace and administrative slaves. Bagnio slaves, the most numerous group, toiled at manual labor in the marine or the mole, though some were assigned specialized tasks such as blacksmithing or carpentry. *Papalunas* paid a monthly fee to avoid labor although they were occasionally required to work. Administrative slaves and those in the palace, or “big house,” were largely exempt from the grueling manual labor required of bagnio slaves and, like some American house servants, most received money

²⁸ Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 60.

²⁹ Cathcart, *Captives*, 15. Robert Montgomery to James Leander Cathcart, Alicante, 16 April 1795, Cathcart Family Papers, Box 1, Correspondence 1795, Manuscript and Archives Section, New-York Public Library, New York.

³⁰ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 108-109. See also Hudson, ““All That Cash,”” 83-84; McDonnell, “Money Knows No Master,” 8; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 365.

or privileges along with their jobs. Even the palace's head scavenger, who cleaned up after the Dey's horses and mules, sold the manure in town "as one of his perquisites of office."³¹

Perhaps the best way to "get ahead" economically and otherwise as a Western slave in Algiers was to serve in one of the few administrative slave positions. With these positions, slaves received quarter upgrades, better food, tips, and considerable autonomy. Slaves assigned to the *Vikilhadge* of the Marine were tipped in cash, did no work on Fridays, and were not subject to the Turkish Guardians or "the orders of anyone else." These perks made this a prized placement, and, according to Cathcart, "a great deal of interest was made to get there."³²

Once Cathcart achieved an administrative post in Algiers, he no longer complained of hunger, his quarters, food, or clothing. Instead, he described the nature of his work and those under whom he labored. Like many African American house servants, Cathcart lived materially better than fellow slaves and avoided manual labor, but he worked more closely with his masters, the Algerians, than with fellow slaves. Frequently at the beck and call of his Algerian master, he called only his evenings his own, and, because he was ever-present, he sometimes suffered abuse at his master's hand. Cathcart, for instance, fell victim to the Dey's impatient fury while awaiting

³¹ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 21; Cathcart, *Captives*, 16; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 365.

³² Cathcart, *Captives*, 117-118.

American money to cement the enslaved Americans' redemption. The Dey had "no one to spit his Venom at" but Cathcart, who could be "call'd his American Spiteometer."³³

As in America, slaves promoted to special positions found their relationship with their master "more complex, demanding, and...susceptible to manipulation." Western boys chosen to serve the Dey felt the effects of the Dey's capricious temper for the short time they were in favor. The Dey, for example, often beat those who attended him, and, from the slave's point of view, these beatings required little or no provocation.

According to Cathcart, these boys preferred being in the marine where they were not subject to the "Dey[']s abominable conduct," which, Cathcart insinuated, was sometimes sexual in nature. This elite position, concluded Cathcart, was hardly worth the perks. The Dey's word, after all, was law, making the boys' situation "by no means enviable, their fine clothes, money and good living not excepted."³⁴

For the most part, Cathcart evidently believed clothes, money, and good living reason enough to climb the slave hierarchy in Algiers. His steady rise was accompanied by improvements in his standard of living. While serving the *Vikilhadge*, or Secretary, of the Marine in 1787, Cathcart ate well and received "emoluments" from the *Vikilhadge's* visitors. He then served the Dey and his guests coffee as a *cofeegi*. As members of the Dey's upper apartment, *cofeegis* lived "better than they would in their own country," in terms of food, clothing, and earnings. Not only were they "maintained by the Dey's own

³³ Cathcart, *Captives*, 21. On house servants and their often uncomfortable proximity to their masters, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974), 331-333; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 108.

³⁴ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 334; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 26.

table,” which meant they spent less supplementing their rations than did bagnio slaves, they were also tipped each time they poured coffee.³⁵

Later, Cathcart was employed as Clerk of the Bagnio Gallera, a position that came with a tavern on which only half duty was paid to the Regency.³⁶ At this point, Cathcart’s privileged positions had made him quite comfortable. With his “emoluments” and perks, he ate and dressed well, and had money left over to purchase the Mad House Tavern. When selected to be the Christian Secretary to the Dey, Cathcart added a fourth tavern to his collection. This one was located in the city, not in a bagnio. The Christian Secretary could purchase alcohol at lower prices than other tavern keepers, and he was awarded three dollars for every Western slave redeemed from Algerian slavery.³⁷

Cathcart functioned as a small businessman in Algiers. He was connected to and knowledgeable about the local economy. He procured alcohol and food for his taverns locally and hired other Western slaves to run them.³⁸ In America, slave businesses

³⁵ *Cofeegis* got tips from the Dey’s visitors, who might be European consuls, dignitaries from Turkey, Tunis, or Morocco, or local Grandees. The Algerian *Vikilhadge*, or *wakil al-kharj*, oversaw the fleet and relations with European nations. Daniel Panzac, *Barbary Corsairs: The End of a Legend*, translated by Victoria Hobson and compiled by John E. Hawkes (Boston: Brill, 2005), 14; William Spencer, *Algiers in the Age of Corsairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 52; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004) 19; Cathcart, *Captives*, 14-15; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 56-57, 129.

³⁶ Cathcart, *Extracts from Journal*, 158; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 19-20; Cathcart, *Captives*, 14, 18, 45-46.

³⁷ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 137, 158.

³⁸ In the seventeenth century, Western slaves set up businesses other than taverns, but, like tavern keepers, they paid their master a percentage of their profits. Ellen G. Friedman, “Christian Captives at ‘Hard Labor’ in Algiers, 16th-18th Centuries,” *The*

assisted the slave, his family, and often the slave community, but such businesses might also serve the master's purposes. Similarly, Cathcart personally lived well and aided his "brother sufferers," but the Algerian Regency also profited from his business. The Regency required Cathcart and other tavern-keeping slaves to purchase the privilege of running a tavern, charged them duties and rent, required them to pay for the Dey's animals' upkeep, and assessed other fines from time to time.

In America and Algiers, "slave entrepreneurs" like Cathcart were highly unusual, and their existence and success caused divisions within the slave community. Slaves who were successful within the plantation or slave system were less likely to run away than their counterparts. As "partial insiders," these slaves linked their success and standing to their master. Cathcart's personal fortune and standing were intimately linked to the Dey's decisions. Cathcart ascended to the post of Christian Secretary, in part, via a loan from the Dey, and his role in American negotiations depended on his status in Algiers, which he retained at the whim of the Dey.³⁹

Cathcart's personal affairs were tied to the Dey's in other ways, as well. When the Dey demolished the Bagnio Siddi Hamuda to build a mosque, Cathcart reported a

International Journal of African Historical Studies 13, no. 4 (1980): 622. Wine and stronger spirits were imported from Europe or the Levant, but tavern keepers purchased much of the alcohol they served from prizes the corsairs brought into Algiers. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 98-99. See Schweninger for a discussion of slaves in America who ran businesses. Schweninger, *Black Property*, 47-51.

³⁹ Morgan argued that slave drivers and foremen "drew close to their master," in the course of proving their worth to their master; they were less likely to run away. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 344-345; Schweninger, *Black Property Owners*, 51; Edelson, "Affiliation without Affinity," 218, 240.

monetary loss. He owned one of the seven taverns in this bagnio, which he said cost him 475 sequins (\$855) “only for the bare walls.” Unfortunately for Cathcart, this coincided with a fine assessed on all Western tavern keepers. The Dey demanded that the tavern keepers together pay 2000 sequins (\$3600) for the loss of two Oran slaves who were killed in a tavern fight. The Dey believed the slaves would not have died had “intoxicating liquors” not been sold to them.

The Dey threatened to confiscate all tavern keepers’ property and assign them to hard labor if they did not pay. Eventually, they worked out terms of payment. Each tavern keeper paid 80 sequins (\$144) at the rate of 5 sequins (\$9) per month. Cathcart, who owned more than one tavern, paid 160 sequins (\$288) total at 10 sequins (\$18) a month. Cathcart recorded a loss of 715 sequins (\$1287) in a “twelve-month,” bitterly noting that this was his “recompense...for Eleven years of captivity and servitude.”⁴⁰

Because slave-businessmen like Cathcart had a vested interest in their master’s finances and good will, their brethren sometimes suspected them of being in cahoots with their master. After all, successful slaves seemingly bought in to the master’s system, literally. Their wealth and status clearly depended on their master. No doubt this accounted for Cathcart’s frequent and anxious disclaimers. He self-consciously explained that his taverns accounted “for my having money at my command when my

⁴⁰ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 162-164; “The Diplomatic Journal and Letter Book of James Leander Cathcart, 1788-1795,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 64 (Worcester: Published by the Society, 1955): 376.

fellow sufferers had none.” His money, he declaimed loudly, was only good to him as long as it helped him aid his fellow sufferers.⁴¹

“Pressed by Necessity”⁴²

All Western slaves needed money: *papalunas* to fund their labor-free status and living arrangements and bagnio slaves for adequate food and clothing. Since neither earned tips, they had to pursue various avenues to get cash. As slaves in other locations did, some worked a trade while others stole. Some were sent charity from their friends and families, other Western consuls, and charitable organizations. Some borrowed money from business connections, family, or each other. Most unusually, some Western slaves got money from their country’s government. To a large degree, Western slaves’ status determined the ways in which they obtained money and governed their earning potential.

Algiers, like other slave regimes, permitted slaves to “trade and engage in business.” While some elite slaves ran businesses, such as taverns, bagnio slaves were more likely to work a trade as a method of getting cash.⁴³ Neither *papalunas* nor elite

⁴¹ Cathcart, Extracts from Journal, 117; Schweninger, *Black Property*, 47-51. Cathcart’s status, like that of slave drivers in America, derived from their master, whereas slave artisans’ status “rested on their own considerable achievements.” Since artisans did not depend on their master for their skill and they could earn money using it, they ran away more frequently than slave drivers and foremen. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 169.

⁴² Cathcart, Extracts from Journal, 117.

⁴³ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 358. See McDonald for the variety of ways Louisiana slaves earned money. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 50-62; Morgan for Chesapeake and Lowcountry methods of earning money and Berlin for “overwork payments” made to some slaves. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 364-365; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 136-137.

slaves appeared to ply a trade, and though bagnio slaves were more likely to do so, it is unclear how many did so in the late eighteenth century. Prior to the 1770s, Western slaves with money and desire paid a fee that removed them from manual labor and allowed them to work their trade daily in the bagnio, but by the late eighteenth century, slaves were so scarce that this privilege was no longer granted. They could only pursue their own work after toiling all day for the Regency.

According to Cathcart, many Western slaves chose to exert themselves nightly. He observed slave shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, sawyers, and hucksters working in the bagnios. These slaves might have sold their wares to fellow slaves or anyone with whom they had contact, including city residents. Unfortunately, Cathcart did not identify any American producers, and other sources did not specify who worked trades or how many did so, either. Bagnio slaves had little time for their own vocations, and their daily drudgery may have prevented many from evening strivings. In addition, Americans received a small government stipend for much of their time in Algiers, and this may have met their monetary needs well enough without evening work.⁴⁴

All Western slaves, including those in the bagnios, wanted to survive long enough to be redeemed from Algerian slavery. In order to survive, they had to scrape together the means to stay “above the level of utter destitution,” a goal they met “by hook or by crook.” Western slaves, but particularly those in the bagnios, pilfered whenever they

⁴⁴ Apparently, men had been permitted to work in the bagnios all day for one dollar. Davis noted a decline in privately owned Western slaves in the seventeenth century. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 182; Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 28; Filippo Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers...* (London: H. Colburn, 1818), 85, 246-247; Cathcart, *Captives*, 54; Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 117.

could, from whomever they could, “though they often hazard their lives by doing so.” They stole things they could eat, use, or sell. Pushed by hunger, most thefts were, like those in America, “protests against shorter rations.” When driven out of the city and to work each morning, bagnio slaves grabbed what they could from the “influx of camels, mules, asses, and laborers” loaded with provisions. The noise and confusion aided them in swiping something as they passed by those entering the city.⁴⁵

Western slaves stole from their workplace. Those assigned to the kitchens appropriated food, which they sometimes shared with their fellows. Garden slaves surreptitiously ate the Dey’s pigeons, risking their necks to capture the birds. Slaves working in the marine stole naval stores though this was a more dangerous endeavor, and one that required the guards’ connivance because each slave was searched as he passed from his workplace into the city. With a guard’s help, naval stores could be sold in town or to merchants with vessels in the harbor. Unfortunately, captives’ writings do not detail how this process worked, how frequently it occurred, or if it provided adequate support for any slaves. Neither Cathcart nor Foss, nor other sources, gave any tantalizing details of this type of transaction.⁴⁶

Slaves assigned to other positions swiped cash or goods from their masters. In 1791, a Portuguese slave “Rob[b]ed his Master,” but the slave was swiftly apprehended.

⁴⁵ Clissold, *Barbary Slaves*, 60; Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 28; Schlotterbeck, “Internal Economy of Slavery,” 175; Cathcart, *Captives*, 59. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 603. Campbell discussed slaves feeling entitled to their master’s property. Campbell, ““A Kind of Freeman,”” 153.

⁴⁶ Cathcart, *Captives*, 89; Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 25.

Apparently, this slave lacked the means or time to get rid of the merchandise, for the authorities found the “Stolen Goods” in his possession. Because privately held slaves such as this one spent far less time in the bagnios, it is possible they found it difficult to form partnerships with other slaves and with Turkish accomplices. Without collusion, detection was more likely.

If they could, Western slaves forced complicity for their theft. In 1792, two Oran slaves stole cash from their master, the Prime Minister of Algiers, and then talked a third slave from Oran, a boy named Antonio Meliano, into taking a share. They stole his share, but threatened to pin the entire theft on him if he reported the incident. Unfortunately for the two scheming slaves, when the money was missed and the boy questioned, he confessed everything.⁴⁷

Western slaves also purloined from other Algerian inhabitants, which suggests the ease of movement many slaves had within Algiers. They particularly filched food and clothing, and cash if they could, which was true of enslaved African Americans in the United States as well. Perhaps needing to clothe himself or sell the clothes to feed himself, a Portuguese slave at the “French Garden” confessed that “he Stole Cloaths out of a Moorish house.” Two Spanish slaves were flogged for plundering “some Jews,” and less than two months later, two slaves stole wine from Algerian inhabitants.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ O’Brien, 2 March 1791, “Remarks;” James Cathcart, 3 July 1792, *A Journal of Remarkable Events in the Regency of Algiers 1792*, Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Davis discussed slave thefts in an earlier period. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 99-100.

⁴⁸ African American slaves in the U.S. also stole livestock, and, like Western slaves in Algiers, liquor and money if they could lay hands on them. O’Brien, 18 Sept 1790, 9

Slaves surely stole from each other as well, though this is not well-documented in American sources, and, if it is mentioned, Americans were not the thieves. Cathcart protected himself against pilfering fellow slaves when moved from the palace to a bagnio. He carefully placed his possessions under his head, both as a pillow and as protection from theft. He guarded a decent sum of eight dollars, but some slaves had far more, which, no doubt, made them alluring targets. A slave owned by the *Vikilhadge* possessed 700 sequins, or roughly \$1260, which he likely earned in tips. Four hundred sequins, or about \$720, were stolen from a Genoan slave; this slave must have had a position high enough to report the theft and expect results.⁴⁹

The rare rich slave generally did not live in the bagnios nor work in the marine. Bagnio slaves had few chances to earn money at all, let alone huge sums. Most bagnio slaves were poor; in fact, most were “too poor to enjoy the taverns.” If they had a stash, they had nowhere to hide it from would-be thieves in the bagnios. Of course, it is hard to tell how many bagnio slaves were robbed since they had little recourse and such an occurrence would not necessarily be recorded anywhere.⁵⁰

Dec 1790, 24 November 1790, “Remarks;” Cathcart, *Captives*, 103; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 370.

⁴⁹ Cathcart had “four dollar gold coins and two sequins in gold.” Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 127; Account of Captivity, 55; *Captives*, 115; O’Brien, 2 March 1790, 8 February 1791, “Remarks.” According to Cathcart, 1 sequin was equal to 180 cents and 1 Spanish dollar to 100 cents. “Diplomatic Journal,” AAS, 435-436. A few American slaves earned “quite substantial sums of money,” as well, and they protected their property from fellow slaves. Hudson, ““All That Cash,”” 82; McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 33; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 114, 116.

⁵⁰ Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 124.

Western slaves committed thefts for different reasons that ranged from the need to survive to the desire to purchase luxuries and privileges. They may also have stolen for a lark, or as a way to avenge themselves on their captors. When pressed by necessity or “motives of villainy,” reported Cathcart, Western slaves snatched shoes left by the mosque door by praying Muslims. This clearly amused Cathcart, who noted that thirty to forty pairs might be taken at a time, leaving the “true believers to go home bare foot.”⁵¹

“Miserable Pittance”⁵²

A less risky and unique source of funds was money that might be forwarded by one’s country of origin. For most of their time in Algiers, enslaved Americans received money from the U.S. government, which they could use as they wished. This type of support would have been anathema to American masters’ paternalistic pretensions. Since the Regency expected Western slaves to fend for themselves, however, they were only too happy for their slaves to receive money and other necessities from outside sources. Essentially, the Algerians let slaves’ home governments support their enslaved citizens if they were so inclined.

Some countries sent regular allowances to their enslaved countrymen while others randomly sent small sums, and some sent no money at all. From 1785 to 1789, the United States government dispatched a small allowance to all American slaves. Officers

⁵¹ Cathcart, *Extracts from My Journal*, 117; Davies, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 100-101.

⁵² “Petition of American Captives in Algiers,” *Independent Gazetteer and Agricultural Repository*, 21 December 1793, Philadelphia; Cathcart, Cathcart Family Papers, Box 1, Correspondence 1785-1794, N.Y.P.L.

were evidently paid enough to rent a house in Algiers where they lived “very comfortably.” Mariners collected only seven and a half cents a day. Nevertheless, these seemingly paltry funds “alleviate[d] in some degree the rigor of our Captivity,” and when it was discontinued, the men were “exposed to the ravages of the plague, hunger, hard labor, and imprisonment.” No allowance was disbursed between 1789 and 1792; during this time, American slaves were “reduced to the Utmost distress.”⁵³

When Algerian corsairs snared eleven American ships in 1793, the United States government made several provisions for the newly-increased American slave population. The government gave all enslaved Americans “a comfortable suit of Cloathing,” which mariner John Foss found “decent and comfortable.”⁵⁴ In addition, the U.S. government paid all enslaved Americans an allowance between 1793 and their 1796 redemption. Like Algerian privileges, the allowance was rank-based: captains received eight dollars a month, mates six, and mariners the considerable upgrade of “twelve Cents p[e]r day,”

⁵³ Mariners received approximately \$2.10 a month. In 1785, the mates were taken out of the marine and put with the captains. Cathcart, *Captives*, 18; James L. Cathcart, 31 May [n.d.], Cathcart Family Papers, 1785-1817, Box 1, Correspondence 1785-1794, N.Y.P.L.; New York; “Petition of Prisoners at Algiers,” 29 March 1792, in Dudley Knox (ed.), *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers*, vol. 1 (Washington: Office of Naval Records, 1929), 35, 39; “Petition of American Captives in Algiers,” *Independent Gazetteer and Agricultural Repository*, 21 December 1793, Philadelphia.

⁵⁴ David Humphreys to Robert Montgomery, 1 December 1793, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 56-57. According to Foss, those in the bagnios got new clothes, which consisted of trousers and frocks, on December 23rd. The American consul thought that the captains might not find their suit so pleasing, and suggested they might “chuse rather to receive the am[ount] in money” instead of the suit. Mariners were not given this option. According to Parker, Humphreys estimated the cost of clothing for an officer at 398 ½ Spanish *real vellóns* and a mariner at 342 ½; a Spanish *real vellón*, he noted, was a Spanish copper coin “worth almost 5 cents.” Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, fn. 24.

which amounted to about \$3.60 a month. Seamen were later afforded three-quarters of a dollar more. Pleased about the support that kept them from starving, mariner Foss bragged that as no other country supported their countrymen, the U.S. set “an example of humanity to all the governments of the world.” Even the Algerians, he noted, viewed “the American character...in the most exalted light.” Perhaps the Algerians simply knew a good deal when they saw it: U.S. support brought money into their economy and into Algerian hands.⁵⁵

Lastly, the U.S. government arranged a line of credit for American officers, including repaying “whatever monies” had already been advanced “to relieve the pressing necessities of the Citizens of the U.S. lately captur’d and Carried into Algiers.”⁵⁶ This courtesy did not appear to be extended to mariners. Consuls and their agents seemed reluctant to advance any fund to mariners unless their government specified funds for that purpose. They trusted officers to re-pay them if the government did not, but were less willing to trust common seamen.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 122-124; Extract from letter from John Foss to his mother in Newburyport, Algiers, 12 April 1795, *Salem Gazette* vol. ix, n. 461 (Salem: Thomas C. Cushing, 11 August 1795).

⁵⁶ Those captured had been in captivity for eight years when this petition appeared. It asked that the petition be “stuck up at public view, so that the Citizens of the United States will know what our fate is to be.” David Humphreys to Robert Montgomery, 1 December 1793, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 56-57.

⁵⁷ De Expilly, the Spanish consul, refused money to Americans in the marines until the U.S. promised he would be reimbursed. O’Brien, O’Brien to William Carmichael, 18 February 1790, “Remarks.”

Since the United States did not have a diplomatic presence in Algiers, money sent to enslaved Americans passed through European consuls who were willing to help. Consular agents from one country representing another and aiding their enslaved men seemed to be a common practice in North Africa. In 1813, for example, Swedish consul John Norderling supported Dutch captives and enslaved Americans. He even boarded two Americans free of charge—to them—for two years. In 1813, the U.S. government reimbursed him for \$376.15 for this and other services he offered. That same year, Consul Tobias Lear advanced money to enslaved Portuguese officers in Algiers.⁵⁸

In addition to their support for some Western slaves, European consuls funded the slave hospital in Algiers and donated money to be given out to the patients by priests who manned the hospital. They bestowed one masoon, or about two and one-half cents, weekly on Western slaves in their care. On Easter and Christmas, they gave each patient three masoons, or about seven and a half cents.⁵⁹ Custom also dictated that consuls distribute cash to bagnio slaves on special occasions. Cathcart presented each bagnio

⁵⁸ William [illegible] to James Monroe, Secretary of State, Algiers, 21 December 1816, Diplomatic Correspondence RG 59 1785-1796, Despatches Algiers, 1815-1817, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland; Account of Tobias Lear, 24 July 1813, Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury Transmitting a Statement of Monies Disbursed from the Treasury of the United States for the Expenses of Intercourse with the Barbary Powers during the Years 1810 and 1811, 4 January 1812 (Washington City: Roger Chew Weightman, 1812).

⁵⁹ Western merchants also contributed to the hospital fund. Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 123. Monetary equivalencies are from Cathcart. "Diplomatic Journal," AAS, 436.

slave with 6 masoons or 15 cents on behalf of the United States when the Americans were redeemed, a gesture expected by convention.⁶⁰

Because providing money to slaves was not provided for in consuls' budgets, consuls were wary of advancing funds to slaves without being sure they could recoup money loaned. When Americans were first captured, European consuls were ready and willing to provide assistance, but they balked when they found the United States might not pay them back. Charles Logie, the British consul in Algiers, paid the Regency to release American officers from marine work, apparently with the expectation that he would be compensated. By 1786, he had learned otherwise. Subsequently, he and other European consuls were less willing to part with money without an official guarantee of payment.

Consuls' reluctance to loan money limited cash and credit available to enslaved Americans, and therefore limited what privileges they could purchase. In 1786, for example, O'Brien was "surprised" that American dignitary John Lamb would not pay Logie "the small sum of about 5 guineas which Mr. Logie paid to the marine for

⁶⁰ Anybody could donate money to the slave hospitals, including Western slaves with money who were so inclined. Though Cathcart gave out twice this sum, he charged the U.S. government only forty dollars. Cathcart Family Papers, 9 June 1798, Box 1, Correspondence etc. 1789-1799, N.Y.P.L. As Algerian consul in the early 1800s, Tobias Lear kept accounts listing distributions to Western slaves. Every year, he gave about forty dollars to bagnio slaves at Easter, about that at Christmas, and about sixty dollar to slaves in the hospital regularly. Account of Tobias Lear, 28 March 1812, 26 November 1812, July 3 Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury Transmitting a Statement of Monies Disbursed from the Treasury of the United States for Expenses of Intercourse with the Barbary Powers During the years 1810 and 1811 (Washington City: Roger Chew Weightman, 1812); 21 April and 24 December 1810 U.S. Treasury Department, Letter from Secretary Transmitting a Statement in Obedience to an Act Fixing the Compensation of Public Ministers, March 4, 1814 (Washington: A & G Ways, 1814).

excluding us from it.”⁶¹ In September, the Spanish consul, Miguel de Expilly, told O’Brien he “would no Longer advance Americans the monthly pay, until the Money” he had already advanced was paid and he had “fresh orders.”⁶² All enslaved Americans felt the effects of this edict, but the *papalunas* were particularly in a bind. Not working a trade to earn money nor serving in a privileged position to garner tips, O’Brien and the officers were completely dependent on the government’s handouts and on charity to support them.

O’Brien clearly resented his dependence on de Expilly and de Expilly’s increasingly grudging support. On July 4th, O’Brien grumbled about putting up with the “pride and ill nature” of his “present protector,” a circumstance that “in all its Bitterness and Misery” was required because of his “Humiliating Dependence.” The two sequins he received from de Expilly in August 1790 should have been welcome since the Americans received no government allowance during this time. However, O’Brien noted he had “as yet...given him no Receipt,” as if to say he did not intend to repay de Expilly. Since he had been under de Expilly’s protection, the man had given him 20 sequins, a sum he seemed to think fell far short of what it should have been.⁶³

Even open-handed charity irked O’Brien at this point. Don Miguel D. Larcca, the Spanish chargé d’affaires, explained to O’Brien that “he would privately” supply funds

⁶¹ O’Brien to Thomas Jefferson, U.S. Minister to Paris, Algiers, 8 June 1786, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 6.

⁶² O’Brien, on the back of his journal, “Remarks.”

⁶³ O’Brien, 15 August 1790, “Remarks.”

even though de Expilly had ordered him not to supply O'Brien with money. A month later Larcca asked if O'Brien needed cash, all the while declaiming that de Expilly explicitly instructed him not to give money to any American. O'Brien declined this offer, and again refused him on Christmas Day.⁶⁴

At the same time, O'Brien tried to wring money out of de Expilly, or more accurately, from the U.S. government that would reimburse de Expilly. O'Brien implored William Short, the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Madrid, to write "a few Lines" to de Expilly on behalf of the enslaved Americans. While they waited, O'Brien warned, his "Brother Sufferers" endured unbearable hardships because "at present Nothing [is] allowed them by their Country, so as to Relieve their Necessities." Their suffering would be lessened—and, though he did not mention it, O'Brien's comfort ensured— if the U.S. compensated de Expilly for past and future outlays.⁶⁵

Like Cathcart, O'Brien presented his actions as something he did primarily for the greater good rather than his own comfort; his letter-writing campaign was strictly altruistic. O'Brien, for example, appealed to Congress and "etc etc etc [*sic*]" to pay the Swedish consul for his brother sufferers, not to protect his *papaluna* status. As he explained to Cathcart, he happily laid himself "under a Greater Obligation to serve you

⁶⁴ O'Brien, 4 Oct 1790, 27 Nov. 1790, "Christmas Day" 1790, "Remarks."

⁶⁵ O'Brien to William Short, 3 January 1790, Papers of William Short, 1778-1853, Reel 3, container 6, William and Mary Library; O'Brien to Cathcart, 13 March 1794, Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1785-1794, N.Y.P.L.

and all the Rest of our brother Sufferers.”⁶⁶ Perhaps both Cathcart and O’Brien, the administrative slave and the former officer, uncomfortable depending on others for support, shifted the attention to fellow slaves. Charity was a touchy issue for both. They asked for charity for their brother sufferers, hoping perhaps to get their fair share without appearing cravenly dependent.

Cathcart, like O’Brien, hated to appear dependent, so he vociferously proclaimed to his independence while enslaved. Cathcart bore a particular grudge against Dr. Werner, the British surgeon, who painted Cathcart not only as needy, but also as happily enslaved. Cathcart lived with Dr. Werner, at Werner’s request, to “make out [Werner’s] accompts,” which took about six months. Until the accounts were closed, Werner treated him “tolerable well,” but at that point, Werner used “improper language” and tried to curtail Cathcart’s movements. Though Werner had agreed to support Cathcart while his accounts were cleared, Cathcart haughtily ordered Werner to “make out an account” for his room and board while at the Werner’s. Paying for his room and board would prove his independence from Werner. To his chagrin, Werner refused.⁶⁷

Worse, Werner dubbed Cathcart a slave, and implied that a slavish character accompanied his official status. As proof, Werner noted that Cathcart preferred the company of Western slaves to that of free men. In his defense, Cathcart explained that Werner stopped providing him with breakfast, forcing Cathcart to grab breakfast in a

⁶⁶ O’Brien to Cathcart, Saturday at “noon full” March 3 [n.d.], Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1785-1794, N.Y.P.L.

⁶⁷ Parker labeled Cathcart “compulsively impertinent.” Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 45; Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 135-136.

bagnio tavern. Because Cathcart went to the bagnio, Werner claimed that he “kept company with slaves and of course was not Company for him.” Perhaps most cutting, Werner’s wife observed “how happy some people were that they were slaves, that they were better off than in their own country.”⁶⁸

In his journal, Cathcart made it clear that he never depended on Werner for anything. Rather, Werner depended on him for his financial acumen. While at the Werners’, Cathcart ate at their table, but, as he wrote, “as I had enough money to serve all my wants, I was entirely independent of him.” Cathcart even lent Werner money to pay off a business partner, but Werner denied this, claiming that he had simply held Cathcart’s money for him. Meanwhile, Cathcart averred that he saw Werner passing the money to his partner.⁶⁹

While charity might help other Americans, Cathcart declared himself self-sufficient. He would never “degrade” himself or his family “so much as to become the object of public charity,” especially “after plunging myself into slavery in the service of America.” He did “strongly recommend” his brother sufferers take advantage of Englishman John Horne Tooke’s offer of money for the enslaved Americans. The offending money would be raised in England, and Cathcart was “firmly resolved to wait with fortitude becoming a Christian and an American” until “honorable redemption.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Cathcart, “Diplomatic Journal,” AAS, 324-325.

⁶⁹ Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 137; “Diplomatic Journal,” AAS, 325.

⁷⁰ Cathcart passionately refused English aid when he was twenty-two and plague ran through Algiers according to his notations. He followed this letter to Werner with a report of how he left Algiers, which was not as a charity case. Rather, he left Algiers

Of course, of all the American captives, Cathcart needed charity and governmental support the least. Intensely proud of his Algerian success, he bragged about his wealth especially when it served his enslaved countrymen. He reiterated again and again that when he left Algiers, he left in “my own vessel, navigated by myself.” While enslaved, he had remained independent and relied only on himself.⁷¹

Despite Cathcart’s and sometimes O’Brien’s reluctance to admit it to themselves, enslaved Americans did receive charitable funds from home and abroad. The Swedish consul, for example, disbursed nine hundred dollars sent by the “friends of America at Lisbon.” Unlike American-sent aid, these friends insisted that the sum be divided among “those unfortunate new in equal share without respect to officer or seaman.” After an additional eleven American ships were captured in 1793, American prisoners were furnished with a monthly credit that “lasted during the whole of their captivity.” In addition, “their friends made them remittances” and “subscriptions had been raised for them in several Ports of Europe.” Cathcart and O’Brien both chafed at being thought dependent, but both were, in the end, just as dependent as their brother sufferers in the bagnios. Cathcart relied on Algerian systems and the Dey for his status and incoming

triumphantly, in his “own vessel, navigated by myself and manned by Moors.” Cathcart, Extract of a letter to Philip Wermer [*sic*], Algiers, 20 May 1791, quoted in *The Captives*, 152-154.

⁷¹ Dr. Wermer or Werner was the surgeon for the British factory in Algiers. Cathcart, Extract of a Letter to Philip Wermer, May 20, 1791, *Captives*, 152, 154, 157.

funds, while O'Brien had to have cash from the United States or other sources to support his status.⁷²

“Generally Liberal to One Another”⁷³

In America, enslaved African Americans amassed property by “drawing on their social relationships with each other.” Families and others who felt social connections worked together to tend provision grounds, raise livestock, and sell products. In America, Jamaica, and other New World locations, slave success depended on family and social networks.⁷⁴ Enslaved Americans lacked family members in Algiers, and they relied less on fellow slaves than did African American slaves in the United States. Nevertheless, those in Algiers elicited support from family, friends and business connections while enslaved. They received varying levels of support, depending on their connections and their status.

Business connections panned out for officers better than their families largely because the family's main source of income was probably the captive himself. Captains Stevens and Coffin supported their families, and O'Brien left behind an “aged mother, brother, sisters” who completely depended on him for subsistence. Most mariners came

⁷² Robert Montgomery to Mr. Skjolderbrand, n.d., Cathcart, Family Papers, Correspondence 1795, N.Y.P.L.; Ray W. Irwin, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers, 1776-1816* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 172-173; Gary Edward Wilson, “American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations, 1784-1816” (Ph.D. Dissertation, North Texas State University, 1979), 322.

⁷³ Cathcart, Extracts from My Journal, 137-138.

⁷⁴ Penningroth, *Claims of Kinfolk*, 80-82, 85; McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 26.

from families with little to spare for redemption costs. Their families worked hard to make ends meet while their men served at sea.⁷⁵

Most officers had business connections on which to draw while mariners, by and large, lacked such connections. The officers, particularly captains, had established personal relationships with the owner or owners of their ship and even with investors. As men of rank, officers were perceived as better business risks, more likely than mariners to pay back loans after redemption. Knowing this, captains and other officers immediately contacted their business connections when captured.

Captains informed the ship's owner and backers when captured, and they combined this news with a request for money. In good petition form, captains stressed their "miserable situation[s]," and their need for cash to survive. As "a Slave in Algiers," Captain Samuel Calder found himself "under the Necessity of begging" the House of Dominick Terry and Company in Cadiz to send him one hundred dollars. In return, he promised to send them bills to draw "upon Mr. David Pearce or my wife in America." Captain Moses Morse similarly wrote to Dominick Terry and Company requesting

⁷⁵ Mariner Charles Colville was redeemed by Scottish friends and family, though he later petitioned Congress to reimburse "the price of [his] ransom, and other expenses." After Colville's petition, the Senate resolved that if they could not make peace, then "the sum of two thousand four hundred dollars, annually, shall be distributed among the said captives of their families, as they may prefer" while in captivity. I am unsure if this was enacted. O'Brien to Thomas Jefferson, Algiers, 8 June 1786, "Senate Resolution to Ransom Prisoners at Algiers," John Burnham to Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, Philadelphia, 18 December 1794, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 5, 24, 88; Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 57-59.

money be sent to him. He guaranteed that a Haverhill friend would cover any drafts for cash sent to him while he was “a distressed slave in this Place.”⁷⁶

Captain John Burnham’s flurry of correspondence indicated the importance of these networks for captives. When captured in October 1793, Burnham informed James Duff in Cadiz of his misfortune, requesting Duff’s assistance. Duff’s October response detailed monies to be sent to Burnham. Duff drew on his connections to raise money for Burnham’s ransom, which English Consul Logie would arrange for them. Meanwhile, Burnham wrote others for aid. By December of 1793 he had applied to a connection in Leghorn, who, in turn, influenced Henry Thompson of London to take a chance on Burnham. Thompson allowed Burnham credit for fifty pounds sterling by February 1, 1794.⁷⁷

Enslaved officers and other Western slaves borrowed from those around them. O’Brien was in “Debt to Mons Flaure” for “15 manbucs and 18 Maysoons” and “under Many Obligations to him for favours rendered me.” Flaure was likely one of a small community of European merchants living in Algiers. Unfortunately, neither O’Brien nor

⁷⁶ Letter from William Penrose to his owners, 4 November 1793, in [Matthew Carey], *A Short History of Algiers*, 3d ed. (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1805), 79; Samuel Calder to the House of Dominick and Terry Co., 3 November 1793, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 54; Moses Morse to the House of Dominick Terry and Co., 1 December 1794, *Naval Documents*, vol. 1, 87.

⁷⁷ Burnham, the *Hope*’s captain, was captured in 1793, and redeemed by Duff in 1794. Thompson’s line of credit would be supplied through a well-known Jewish banker in Algiers. James Duff to John Burnham, Cadiz, 6 October 1793; Otto Franc to John Burnham, Leghorn, 1 February 1794, Folder Burnham, John 1793-1796, Papers Relating to the Pension of Captain Burnham, an Algerian Prisoner, GLC7939, Gilder Lehrman Collection, New York, New York.

anyone else explained why Flaure chose to assist O'Brien. O'Brien took this loan seriously. He kept track of when he made a payment and how much he owed.⁷⁸ These examples probably represent only a fraction of loans European consuls and businessmen made to Western slaves in Algiers.

Most intriguingly, Cathcart borrowed money not only from the Swedish consul, but also from the Dey himself. In 1794, Cathcart was offered the position of Chief Christian Secretary to the Dey. His promotion came with a price. He had to pay the "customary fee" of 383 sequins, which was about \$690. To pay this fee, he borrowed 500 sequins (\$900) from the Dey and 500 sequins from the Swedish consul and his brother. These loans more than covered his ascension to the Chief Secretary position. With these loans and additional loans secured from "other friends turks [*sic*] as well as Christians," he bought a prize loaded with alcohol and utensils for a tavern that came with his new position.

The Dey's loan was not completely a surprise. Cathcart had personally known the new Dey since 1786. In that year, the soon-to-be Dey had been Secretary of the Marine

⁷⁸ O'Brien owed Flaure roughly \$20.70 if using Parker's approximate values. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary*, 198; O'Brien to Cathcart, Algiers, March 6, n.d., Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1798-1799, N.Y.P.L. While Barnby argued that any "Christian captive with wealth or wealthy relatives at home, could always borrow money from the Jewish brokers" and then set up a comfortable house until redeemed, I have found no evidence that this was the case for Americans in Algiers. Business and family connections might inspire the Jewish brokers to lend money, as in the case of Burnham, but most drew on several sources in order to sustain their *papaluna* status. Perhaps none of the Americans were from wealthy enough families or perhaps this was more of an option previous to American captures. Davis, for example, described this during an earlier period. Henry G. Barnby, *Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerian War, 1785-1797* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 43.

and Cathcart served as his clerk. Cathcart had “enjoy’d a considerable share” of the Secretary’s “confidence” while his clerk. When the Secretary became Dey and the post of Chief Christian Secretary was vacated, he promoted Cathcart to that position and floated him a loan so he could take it. The Dey lost little in loaning money to Cathcart. Were Cathcart accused of a crime or misconduct or died, the Regency would get all of his possessions. If Cathcart did not die, he would pay back the loan, and, as a tavern keeper, additional fees and fines. The Swedish brothers, on the other hand, would be reimbursed only if Cathcart lived and earned money to pay them back.⁷⁹

Cathcart had money enough to spare some for his brother sufferers, and he, like other Western slaves with money, occasionally distributed funds. According to Cathcart, Western slaves naturally helped their fellows. As he saw it, they were “generally liberal to each other” for two reasons. First, the Regency took possession of all property when a slave died, even “their tattered garments and Blankets.” Second, in the late eighteenth century, the plague claimed so many slaves’ lives that hoarding wealth seemed pointless and helped only the Regency. Death surrounded the slaves to the point that, as Cathcart put it, “we set no great value upon money.”⁸⁰

Unfortunately, tracing money that slaves gave to other slaves is virtually impossible, as Western slaves left only a few clues about such interactions. A short and

⁷⁹ The Swedish consul and his brother, the Skjoldebrands, together loaned Cathcart 500 sequins. With this money, Cathcart bought a prize loaded with wine, on which he “made a good speculation.” Cathcart, *Captives*, 157; Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 160; “Diplomatic Journal,” AAS, 327.

⁸⁰ Cathcart, *Extracts from My Journal*, 137-138.

cryptic mention in a note from O'Brien to Cathcart is one example. O'Brien wrote only: "This evening from Mr. Patterson George Smith [*sic*] account the sum 80 sequins." This suggests that mariners George Smith and William Patterson paid O'Brien money that they owed him. Regardless of the specifics, the note shows slaves did exchange cash. A similar document dated 1793 also hinted at such loans. In this note, O'Brien thanked Cathcart for a previous letter, "which conveyed to me the Sum you mentioned, which lays me under many obligations to you." To some extent, Western slaves were loaning money to one another while enslaved.⁸¹

Western slaves who were not elite slaves also aided one another although not always with cash. Few bagnio slaves left records. Mariner John Foss did, but if loans were common in the bagnios, Foss may not have considered them worthy of record. Of course, he specifically omitted common occurrences from his journal. On the other hand, it may have been that mariners, like Foss, had less disposable income. They concentrated on their immediate needs if they had money, and probably had nothing left for their fellows.

Foss does record one example of bagnio slaves assisting each other. Some slaves rented private bagnio rooms. If they could not pay at the end of the month, they were put into irons and their "legs chained to a pillar every night, until the money [was] paid." According to Foss, those "miserable objects" were "commonly relieved by the rest of

⁸¹ George Smith of the *Maria* was redeemed by his friends in 1793. William Patterson of the *Dauphin* was redeemed by friends in 1794. O'Brien continued in his second note: "But the note I note you miscarried." O'Brien, 21 December 1790, "Remarks." Cathcart Family Papers, Correspondence 1795-1794, N.Y.P.L.

their fellow-sufferers.”⁸² Foss does not indicate if one’s countrymen were more likely to relieve someone in this position, or if all bagnio slaves pitched in, regardless of nationality, nor if slaves pooled their money or individuals took it upon themselves to aid their fellows.

Not surprisingly, Cathcart and O’Brien, both of whom had greater access to cash, referred to money changing hands more frequently than mariner Foss did. Other Western slaves more readily recalled examples of slaves providing non-monetary aid to each other. In fact, even O’Brien and Cathcart listed non-monetary aid more than cash charity. Only Cathcart mentioned monetary aid again and again—particularly money he dispensed to his fellows.

Early in their captivity, Cathcart visited Captains O’Brien, Coffin and Stephens in the British consul’s garden, both to see his comrades and to share his money with them. Ordinary seaman Cathcart’s sharing seemingly took this pattern ever after: rather than calling on and giving to his down-trodden brother sufferers in the marine, he often chose to distribute his earnings to the officers. Nevertheless, when writing to the American government, he stressed all he had done for the bagnio slaves. On the other hand, Cathcart may have simply dwelt more on the aid he supplied officers. He saved notes officers wrote requesting his help. Mariners may not have written him notes, but requested aid in person or through more informal channels.

⁸² Chained men were released each morning to report to work, and then chained again at night. Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 28.

Cathcart recorded his aid to officers in his journal. He fed O'Brien during O'Brien's short stint at hard labor. O'Brien cleaned mold off pontoons used in the harbor, and during that time, Cathcart nightly supplied him with dinner and a bottle of wine from one of his taverns. Cathcart even sent wine to O'Brien's Turkish Guardian overseer since the man had "no objection to a glass of wine himself." Subsequently, O'Brien was treated "very kindly, and only made to work under the eyes of the *Vikilhadge*." In other words, his overseer put him to work only when the *Vikilhadge* visited the work site.⁸³

Cathcart assisted American bagnio slaves as well. He maintained mariner and shipmate, James Harnet, for four years. During that time Harnet was confined to what the Americans called a "mad house." Harnet was chained in a cell and not provided for during those years. Cathcart made sure he was adequately fed and clothed, and buried him when he died. After redemption, some of the seamen declared that Cathcart went to "considerable expense in relieving the necessity's [*sic*] of his Brother sufferers of 1785." This included administering to the sick and "decently" interring the dead "many of them at his own expense."⁸⁴ Doubtless his aid was much appreciated in the bagnios, but the bulk of his aid went to officers, not to the seamen he so piteously portrayed.

⁸³ O'Brien was sent to the Panton Grande to "cleanse the mold" and was kept there for several weeks. Cathcart, *Captives*, 120; Cathcart, Extracts from my Journal, 136.

⁸⁴ The British consul's garden was about three miles outside of town. Cathcart visited here, and then he stopped by the bagnios. Cathcart, *Captives*, 23-24. O'Brien, on the back of letter dated 9 March 1794, Cathcart, Family Papers, Correspondence 1785-1794, N.Y.P.L.; Cathcart, Family Papers, Folder Correspondence 1798-99, N.Y.P.L.

When eleven American ships were captured in 1793, Cathcart was well placed to help the newly enslaved Americans. As Chief Christian Secretary to the Dey, he used his money and influence to get American mariners assigned to the Bagnio Gallera. He took special care to make sure the officers were well housed. He even put ten officers up in his own room and provided them with “every necessary gratis for a considerable time.” That is, until they could provide for themselves. Considering that Cathcart’s “2 handsome rooms and a kitchen” came free with his position, housing the officers cost him nothing but the loss of some privacy.⁸⁵

The newly enslaved Americans quickly learned to go to Cathcart for aid. Captain Timothy Newman asked that Cathcart use his “Interest to Endeavour to get me leave from the Marine.” If Cathcart managed this, Newman would “ever feel” himself “under the greatest obligations.” Perhaps this explains why Cathcart more readily serviced officers than mariners: officers had more social and economic influence in America. They could, he hoped, use their influence on Cathcart’s behalf once they were redeemed. Cathcart logged his actions on the reverse of Newman’s note. He immediately “applied to the Dey” and secured *papaluna* status for Newman; “that is to go where he pleased in the town and to pay half a sequin each Lunar month.”⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Cathcart took ten masters from the Bagnio Beylique into his own bagnio suite, which had four large windows and “convenience of a pleasant and commodious” terrace. Cathcart, Correspondence 1798-1799, N.Y.P.L.; Cathcart, *Captives*, 55-56.

⁸⁶ Cathcart wrote that *papalunas* paid 96 cents a month for this status. Letter to James Cathcart, Bagnio Galareo, Saturday Evening, n.d., Cathcart, Family Papers, Correspondence 1795, N.Y.P.L.

Not averse to making money from his fellow slaves, Cathcart rented his bagnio suite—for which he paid nothing—to a fellow slave for several months while he worked with Dr. Werner. Meanwhile, Cathcart was provided a room and board, though carefully pointed out had that he had “enough money to serve all [his] wants.” He clearly did not need the money he charged a fellow slave for use of his gratis room. So why did he charge a fellow sufferer for rooms he got free? Why not use this opportunity to support a fellow slave? Ever the businessman, Cathcart may have charged rent because he could. All private bagnio rooms came at a cost, and he simply followed the system. Maybe he could not pass up the chance to make a buck, even at the expense of a fellow slave. Or Cathcart may have interpreted having dependents as the flip side of his own independence. He may have charged only a nominal fee, but he did not record how much he charged or indicate to whom he rented his room.⁸⁷

“For Those Who Had the Means of Subsistence”⁸⁸

Cathcart obviously had money to spend in Algiers, but many Western slaves had cash and all had opportunities to spend whatever money they had. Unlike African American slaves in America, Western slaves had considerable and uncontested economic freedom while enslaved. Cathcart’s room rental, for instance, was strictly up to him.

⁸⁷ Cathcart worked for Dr. Werner, the surgeon at the British factory in Algiers, for six months some time between 1788 and 1791. Cathcart, *Captives*, 137.

⁸⁸ Cathcart, *Account of Captivity*, 67.

Enslaved Americans, like African Americans in the U.S., most of whom “earned pocket change,” purchased “inexpensive creature comforts.”⁸⁹

In America, African American slaves bought items to “enrich their family’s diet and expand their wardrobes.” Western slaves in Algiers likewise purchased food and clothing. At least occasionally, Western slaves used their free time to purchase provisions in the city, though this is not a practice they wrote much about. O’Brien and Cathcart almost never mentioned provisions while Foss recorded shopping for supplies. Foss, an ordinary seaman assigned to the bagnios, may have written about buying food more than the other two men because he was probably the hungriest of the three. He was poorly provisioned by the Regency, and he lacked both the special arrangements that O’Brien had and the privileged slave position that Cathcart enjoyed.⁹⁰

Foss seemed intimately acquainted with market prices for provisions. He knew that a dozen eggs usually sold for a “mazoone and half.” He even proudly recorded a particular bargain in his journal: he was able to buy “a quarter Beef” that weighed “70 lb. for three *Arabia booche*’s; but the common price is about 5.” Fellow slave John

⁸⁹ Morgan and Berlin, “Introduction,” *The Slaves’ Economy*, 14; McDonnell, “Money Knows No Master,” 33.

⁹⁰ Western slaves in Algiers did not, as their counterparts did in America, purchase livestock. There was no way to raise animals in the bagnios, or, seemingly, in the other locations places Western slaves resided. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 137; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 373-374.

Robertson also shopped in Algiers, where he found everything “remarkably cheap.” Slaves, for example, could “get a fine loaf for the value of a halfpenny.”⁹¹

With such cheap provisions, even bagnio slaves could supplement their diet with their scant allowance from the American government. Foss knew the going prices well enough that he understood when he and his fellows were taken advantage of. Once locked in the bagnios for the night, if a slave “wished to buy any kind of provision,” he could ask the guards to “go and purchase them for us” as long as the guards were “well paid for their trouble.” But “these fraudulent wretches” would “tell us they gave double what they really did give” for the supplies.⁹²

If a Western slave had a bit more income, he could purchase meals. O’Brien, who rarely commented on food, sometimes recorded visits to the consular gardens, particularly the Spanish gardens attached to the out-of-city consular house. These gardens included spaces for relaxation and recreation, as well as places to purchase food. In July of 1792, Cathcart met O’Brien at the Spanish gardens where they played at bowls, walked and had “dinner at Meridian Head.” *Papalunas* and other slaves might also purchase food in the taverns. Since the taverns remained open when the bagnios were locked for the night, a slave could purchase food virtually round the clock. Cathcart

⁹¹ A masoon was worth about two cents. Foss may have shared his 70 pounds of beef with his comrades, but he does not say. Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 70; Quoted in Barnby, *Prisoners of Algiers*, 43.

⁹² Foss, *Journal of Captivity*, 123.

regularly ate at one of his own taverns, and sometimes supplied other Americans with food from them.⁹³

Other services were available in Algiers if one had cash. For between three and nine cents, slaves could use the city baths. Though Cathcart described the baths and the process of bathing in some detail, no other slaves made mention of availing themselves of the sixteen baths in Algiers. In the bagnios, “where every vice was not only tolerated but encouraged,” it seems that sexual services were available, though, again, no American slave admitted to hiring such services nor did they specifically identify other slaves who did. Perhaps paying for sex was not an option for bagnio slaves, who, after all, had very little money and needed what they had for food.⁹⁴

Money for bribery came in handy in Algiers. When his tavern was closed after a brawl, Cathcart found he needed money to induce a Guardian to re-open the tavern. His

⁹³ Apparently, O’Brien had gone to the Spanish garden for three or four days. It seems he spent time there regularly, particularly around holidays. O’Brien, 10 July 1792, 26 November 1790, 6 January 1791, “Remarks;” Cathcart, 9 July 1792 and 10 July 1792, A Journal of Remarkable Events; Cathcart, Extracts from My Journal, 144; Cathcart, Account of Captivity, 56; Cathcart, *Captives*, 18.

⁹⁴ Though Western slaves were forbidden access to local or “Moorish” women, such women may have been available in the bagnio taverns. Two Turks, for example, fought over a “common woman” in the Madhouse Tavern. One Turk shot the other after which the woman was bastinadoed and the tavern closed for a time. O’Brien made several comments about a “Miss Golinda,” who apparently hung out in the bagnio taverns. O’Brien hinted that Miss Golinda was a male slave, but provided no specific details. In 1791, Miss Golinda was one of three Spaniards flogged for “wrangling” in the Bagnio Gallera. O’Brien, 9 January 1791, “Remarks;” Cathcart, Extracts from My Journal, 111, 142, 138-139. Algiers had sixteen bathhouses. Davis argued that Western slaves probably partook of homosexual relations in the bagnios. Former slave Laugier de Tassy described male prostitutes available in Algiers, and it is likely they were also available in the bagnio taverns. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters*, 125-127.

bribe allowed the tavern to re-open, but he had difficulty getting his “servants”—Western slaves who served in the taverns—returned to him. They were finally released to his custody, but only after Cathcart “made a present” of ten sequins to the Guardian. Marine slaves could bribe the “Guardians or slave drivers” for work-free time or an easier task. If the Guardians knew a slave had money, they made life difficult until they possessed some of it. Guardians harassed those slaves, assigning them to the worst work and delivering “cuts with their twisted rattan,” until such slaves were obliged “to purchase...peace with them,” as Cathcart put it. This could be done for thirty to forty cents a day, “but to one who had it not to give, it might as well have been a million.” On the downside, bribing one’s way out of work caused hardship for and ill-will from those fellow-sufferers who “had nothing to give.”⁹⁵

Western slaves were rarely able to purchase what they most wanted: their own freedom. Slaves in America similarly found their ability to buy freedom circumscribed. In America, slaves who brought their freedom often did so as a “collective effort” or “family matter.” In the absence of family assistance, slaves in Algiers might be permitted to purchase their own freedom, which seems to have happened in a very limited fashion in America.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Ten sequins was roughly \$18. After one Turk killed another in the tavern, Cathcart’s tavern was closed and he was sent to hard labor in the marine for two days. Cathcart, *Extracts from My Journal*, 153, 138-140, 128.

⁹⁶ Whitman described how some American masters used “term slavery” as a management technique. Arranging a slave’s manumission kept that slave relatively happy and focused on his redemption. Once a slave was freed, another slave would be purchased and similar terms for his or her manumission arranged. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 235, 281; Whitman, *Price of Freedom*, 334, 337, 355-356.

In Algiers, the Dey had to approve any redemption regardless of who paid the fee, and he seldom allowed slaves to buy their own freedom. Two Spanish slaves were permitted to redeem themselves in 1792. One man, who had been enslaved for twenty-seven years, paid 300 sequins, or about \$540; the other, a slave for over fifteen years, paid 500 sequins, or \$900. Both of these long-term slaves were deserters from Oran. Naturally, the Spanish government did not send funds to these men nor would they pay to redeem them. Spain did not even include them in their general redemption. Since the Algerian government had few ways of making money from them or of getting rid of them, they were allowed to buy their freedom at long last.⁹⁷

Personal redemptions were limited by the Regency. The Regency preferred to free slaves when they arranged peace and payment with a country's government. Only eight Americans out of 129 were released prior to the 1796 general redemption of Americans. Still, redemption or self-purchase was far more possible for Westerners in Algiers than for African Americans in the United States. Of the twenty-one Americans taken in 1785, twelve returned home. Four were redeemed by friends and three, Cathcart, O'Brien and Sloan—freed by the Regency. O'Brien and Cathcart were released to assist in arranging terms of peace with the United States. Sloan occupied a palace position that was automatically manumitted when the Regency made peace with any country. Over

⁹⁷ Cathcart, 17 March 1792, *Journal Commencing January 1st, 1792*; Cathcart, *Captives*, 50, 62, 64; Cathcart, 17 March 1792, *A Journal of Remarkable Events*. Two Venetian boys owned by the Prime Minister of Algiers asked for their liberty. Their parents were poor, they argued, and could not pay to redeem them. They were freed after borrowing 300 sequins each. O'Brien, 19 February 1790, "Remarks;" Cathcart, 20 February 1792, *A Journal Commencing January 1, 1792*.

half, or about 57%, of enslaved Americans captured in 1785 had returned home by 1796. This far outstrips the number of African Americans manumitted in America.⁹⁸

Conclusion

Though Western slaves usually could not purchase their own freedom, they were encouraged to get and spend in other ways. From the time they were captured, they were drawn into an Algerian cash nexus. Unlike masters in other places, many of whom “assumed the right to direct and control their slave property,” Algerian masters impinged little on their Western slaves’ economic lives. In theory, African American slaves had no right to property, but in practice, some African American slaves “with cash in their pockets...could buy” what they wanted when they wanted. Their purchasing power was limited by laws and customs meant to curb their economic independence. American masters feared that slaves used the marketplace to “pursue their own social and economic interests, and, in the process, challenge those of their masters.”⁹⁹

Algerian masters did not fear that market interactions would make their Western slaves “independent and ungovernable.” The Algerians built into their system ways for

⁹⁸ Seven men were redeemed with Charles Colville, but their names and nationalities were not recorded by O’Brien. Since he mentioned other redeemed Americans by name, and more than once, I assume the other men were not Americans. Cathcart, *Americans Captured Since June 1785 and What Became of Them, A Journal Commencing January 1, 1792*; O’Brien to Cathcart, 6 March n.d., *Family Papers, Correspondence 1798-1799*, N.Y.P.L.; Wilson, “American Prisoners,” 63, 7, 5; James Simpson, *Letterbook of James Simpson, 1793-1797*, 20 January 1794 and 7 May 1794, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, 64, 77; U.S. Department of State, *Letter from the Secretary of State Accompanying his Report on the Memorial of Phillip Sloan*, 28th December, 1801 (Washington, 1801), 5-9; *Bill for Relief of John Burnham*, 25 November 1811, 12th U.S. Congress 1811-13, House; O’Brien, 4 July 1790, “Remarks.”

⁹⁹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 118; Campbell, “A Kind of Freeman,” 138.

slaves to get and earn money and permitted them to use that money fairly freely. The Algerians encouraged, and even forced, Western slaves to engage in market exchanges. As in America, requiring slaves to provide much of their own provender and clothing was a “profitable way to defray expenses.” The practice also strengthened “the owners’ hand,” as the “burden of subsistence” was shifted to their laborers.¹⁰⁰

The Algerian system seemed rigged to extract the most money possible from their Western slaves. Similarly, American slave masters aimed to extract their money’s worth from their slaves, though, in America, this was usually a matter of maximizing slaves’ labor. Western slaves paid for their own upkeep while enslaved in Algeria, or they suffered hunger and cold. If they could afford it, they paid for various privileges and services. If they lived through plague epidemics and other dangers, Western slaves or their countries paid Algiers for their redemption. American slavery, then, was primarily a system of labor; Algerian slaves worked, but they were also held for ransom.

As much as the slaves’ economy served the master, it also helped the slaves. The ability to participate in economic life made a distinct difference in Western slaves’ experience, and, for this reason, they attached great value to money. In America, “no matter how hard” a slave “labored, participation in the slaves’ economy did not guarantee a better life.” Money in Algiers, on the other hand, consistently allowed a slave to live

¹⁰⁰ Schweninger, *Black Property*, 53; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 33, 203.

more comfortably. They might purchase food, time off work, better quarters, alcohol, and other commodities and privileges.¹⁰¹

Some Western slaves, however, lived more comfortably than others. For every Cathcart, who climbed the slave ladder of success, there were hundreds of bagnio slaves laboring in the marine, short of rations and without funds to purchase food let alone any of the privileges available to some slaves. As it did in America, varying access to the market created and reinforced divisions “within slave society.” In Algiers, palace or elite slaves had the steadiest and surest money flow. Unlike O’Brien, whose cash flow could be cut off any time by the U.S. government or his European patrons, elite slaves earned cash tips that ensured a more or less continual flow of funds.¹⁰²

Cathcart’s move up in Algiers likely caused some rancor from his fellow slaves despite aid he tossed their way from time to time. His climb was not due simply to a “caprice of fortune,” as he claimed, but also to his drive, maneuvering, and determination. The ultimate self-made slave, Cathcart was justifiably proud of his accomplishments in Algiers. Certainly, his Algerian experience paid off after he was

¹⁰¹ Hudson, “‘All That Cash,’” 80; Berlin and Morgan, “Introduction,” *The Slaves’ Economy*, 18.

¹⁰² Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 365; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 138; Berlin and Morgan, “Introduction,” *The Slaves’ Economy*, 17. For example, Pananti referred to a Livornese slave named Brunet who had several talents “by which he was enabled to make some money while at Algiers, and enjoyed many privileges.” Pananti, *Narrative of a Residence in Algiers*, 85. See also the notation in the Treasury Papers for January 2nd, 1796, when “Michael Clerk of Marine” was paid for “a list of our Captives in the Marine and other services.” Michael was paid a fee of two dollars, a necessary expenditure since the list he compiled officially named all those who would be redeemed. United States, Department of the Treasury, Office of the First Auditor, Records 1795-1817, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

redeemed. It is hard to imagine this ordinary seaman serving as an American diplomat, but his Algerian positions and ability to negotiate for the Americans' release made this a reality.¹⁰³

Money and property held out the promise, and even the reality, of a better material life for Western slaves, but, in the end, this system served the master better than the slave. Many American masters permitted slave provision grounds or other ways for their slaves to raise food or earn money, and this practice freed them from providing everything for their slaves. In Algiers, the Regency minimally supported their Western slaves, leaving them largely to fend for themselves as best they could. The Regency not only spent little on these slaves, it profited from them—from rents on rooms, payments from *papalunas*, and fees collected from tavern keepers.¹⁰⁴ In short, while in the southern United States, the slave economy was typically associated with greater slave autonomy and independence, in Algiers, it was an earmark of slave dependence. Western slaves had to beg, borrow, and steal in order to secure money for their survival.

¹⁰³ Cathcart made good through “pluck and intelligence,” which Leiner took as proof that Western slaves were not treated poorly and their lives were not always ruined by slavery. Cathcart hardly qualified as a typical Western slave, and therefore should not be used to make general claims about Western slaves in Algiers. O’Brien might provide better support of this thesis. After all, he wrote his “Remarks” to “pass away a dull and tedious hour of Slavery.” Frederick C. Leiner, *The End of Barbary Terror: America’s 1815 War Against the Pirates of North Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 15; O’Brien, 14 November 1790, “Remarks.”

¹⁰⁴ Campbell, ““A Kind of Freeman,”” 154-155.

Chapter 4

“CLEAR THE COUNTRY OF ALL YOU CHRISTIAN DOGS”: WESTERNERS ENSLAVED IN NORTHWEST AFRICA¹

Westerners who wrecked on the northwest African coast were claimed as plunder by pastoral Africans and held in the desert. The way they were enslaved was no less traumatic than being captured at sea by Algerian corsairs, and the resulting slaveries resembled each other in some respects. Western slaves in both locations shared the possibility of redemption—if they survived long enough. Masters and slaves in both locales took advantage of long-standing systems to facilitate redemption. In both, the short-term nature of slavery shaped the experiences of Western slaves in Algiers and northwest Africa. Because this was a short-term slavery, masters in Algiers and northwest Africa did not seek paternalistic interference in their Western slaves' lives. The ability to redeem Western slaves and the ability of slaves to play a role in their redemption defined the contours of master-slave relations.

Though Western slaves in both Algiers and northwest Africa could be ransomed, slavery differed significantly in the two locations. Northwest Africa was rural rather than

¹ Judah Paddock, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Ship Oswego, on the Coast of South Barbary, and of the Sufferings of the Master and the Crew While in Bondage Among the Arabs* (New York: Capt. James Riley, 1818), 133.

urban with a desert climate instead of a Mediterranean one. As a result, desert-held slaves faced a completely different environment than those in Algiers. Sailors held in Algiers entered the familiar setting of a port city while desert-held victims faced an unknown and hostile environment. This difficult geography and climate shaped their slave experience.

Desert-held slaves depended on people familiar with the area—their masters—to keep them alive and to redeem them. In the meantime, they shared the danger of their masters' environs with them. Held singly or in very small groups, they interacted more frequently and closely with their masters than those in Algiers. In Algiers, Western slaves were housed together, worked together, and socialized largely with one another. The strong probability of redemption, hostile environment, and pattern of holding shaped Americans' experiences of enslavement and master-slave relations in northwest Africa.

“Cast a Christian Ship on Shore”²

Over time, countless Westerner ships smashed against the northwest African coast when passing between the Canaries and the coast of Africa near Capes Nun and Bojador, an area historically and widely recognized as a “dangerous navigation.” In fact, Cape Bojador took its name from the Arabic *abu khatar* or *bou khatar*, “father of danger.” Known for frequent fogs, relentless winds, and shallow, reef-ridden waters, Cape Bojador

² According to those shipwrecked, desert-dwelling Arabs looked forward to Western, or Christian, ships wrecking on their coast. For example, Judah Paddock's master's wife prayed constantly that a Western ship loaded with a “great deal of cloth and money” would wreck, thereby enriching her family. Paddock, *Narrative of the Oswego*, 136.

was subject to “dangerous currents” that inexorably pulled ships toward shore, a fact that “every experienced captain” knew.³

Despite its widely-known danger, many Westerners persisted in using this route on their way to get wine from Madeira and salt from Cape Verde. So many ships wrecked here that in 1792 the British consul in Morocco, noting the trouble and cost of ransoming wreck victims, suggested “a clause in their Pass Bond” that would prevent masters “from passing between the Canaries and the Main.” The danger to ships and crews made this a reasonable suggestion, but one not heeded.⁴

Captains continued to sail this way only to have their ships shattered against the shore. While in Mogador in 1800, Captain Judah Paddock of the *Oswego* heard of several demolished ships on the coast. All the captains “attributed their loss to the

³ King rendered the Arabic as *abu khatar*. John Mercer, *Spanish Sahara* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1976), 77; William Lempriere, *A Tour from Gibraltar to Tangier, Sallee, Mogodore, Santa Cruz and Tarudant*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1794), 190; Dean King, *Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004), 40-41; James Matra to Dundass, 15 April 1792, Public Record Office, General Correspondence before 1906, 1761-1906 Morocco, FO 52/10 CUST, 217.

⁴ American captains risked this dangerous passage for salt. Both James Riley, captain of the 1817-wrecked *Commerce*, and Judah Paddock, captain of the 1800-wrecked *Oswego*, were picking up salt from Cape Verde before returning to America. King hinted that Riley might have been trying to pick up slaves, though this was after the 1808 non-importation date. One of the wrecked French ships was a slaver. King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 42; James Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 June 1800, General Services Administration, Despatches from United States Consuls in Tangier, National Archives and Records Administration Services (Washington, 1959); James Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 May 1806, Despatches from the United States Consuls in Tangier, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland; Matra to Dundass, Gibraltar, 15 April 1792, General Correspondence, Morocco, PRO FO52/10, 217.

currents that swept them away.” Captain Benjamin Seavers of the English ship *Indefatigable* lost his ship, he explained, due to a “strong Current, setting beyond common calculations for the Westward.” Captains probably blamed nature rather than poor navigational choices for their wreck so they could collect insurance money.⁵

Those who wrecked typically navigated at night in a dense fog and recognized their peril only when they slammed into rocks or a sand bar, or so they claimed. Caught blindly in the vicious current, crews described a violent impact followed by crushing waves washing over the ship. When navigating near the Canary Islands, for example, the French ship *Sophia* was rocked by a four a.m. squall during which the crew “suddenly” felt a “terrible shock” as they were run “against rocks with a dreadful crash.” The *Oswego*, thrust and held on the rocks, was buffeted by the surf, which “struck tremendously heavy, all the windows came in, and part of the sea came over the taffle rail.” Captain Paddock described the terror of being “surrounded with foamy billows, every surge threatening us with destruction; the roaring of the surf, and the noise of the cracking ship so loud we could scarcely hear anything else.” The surf was so ferocious that Paddock believed his crew had “nothing but death before” them.⁶

⁵ Still a dangerous passage to navigate, the area may have a “magnetic anomaly.” The cold currents hit hot, arid winds, creating heavy fogs and dews on land. Saugnier, *Voyages to the Coast of Africa by Messrs. Saugnier and Brisson*, translated from the French (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1792), 10; Paddock, 27, 306; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 May 1806, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 25; “Geography and Map of Western Sahara,” from Matt Rosenberg, *Your Guide to Geography*, (New York: About, Inc., 2006, accessed 30 June 2006), available from <http://geography.about.com/library/cia/blcwsahara.htm>, p. 1 of 6.

⁶ Charles Cochelet, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Sophia in New Voyages and Travels Consisting of Originals and Translations*, vol. VI (London: Printed for Sir Richard

Ships caught in the Canary Current were often damaged beyond repair.

Devastating waves thrust ships aground and washed over them again and again, dashing them to pieces. The continued assault of the surf damaged or swept away instruments and provisions until staying aboard was untenable, but returning to sea offered little hope of survival. Long boats proved horribly inadequate against the waves, and even if crew members fought past the surf, a long boat was unlikely to carry them far. Further, long boats provided few options for food and water storage, should such provisions have survived. Given this predicament, most crews chose to go ashore. Some crews went to shore piecemeal. Saugnier and his shipmates fretted while their ship was torn apart around them, but were too terrified of the “still more terrible” danger on land to abandon ship. Finally, the cooper, convinced he would live only if he left the ship, swam to the beach. At this point, Africans spotted them, swam to the ship, claimed the remaining men as slaves, and dragged them to shore.⁷

Few crews remained on their ship or returned to their ship. Crew members of the French ship *Sophia* were an exception. When their ship ran aground in a Canarian fog in 1819, some of the crew braved the surf in their long boat, believing they had a better chance at life in the water than with the diabolical natives. Some of the crew fought past

Phillips and Co., 1822), Introduction, 9, 2-3; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 9-10; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 27-28.

⁷ Saugnier, *Voyages*, 19.

the surf, headed towards the open ocean, and disappeared from the historical record.

Perhaps they made it to safety; probably they died on that long boat.⁸

The *Commerce*'s crew delayed landing and enslavement by returning to the sea. Fearing the natives were cannibals, the crew voted to risk death in their long boat instead of going ashore. Captain James Riley saved a few charts, maps, and instruments from the ship's wreckage, and with these, the men planned to navigate into the Atlantic where they might be saved by a passing ship. They loaded their damaged long boat with what water and other supplies they salvaged, including a pig, and headed into the open ocean. Worn by hunger, an intense thirst lessened only by wine and urine, and fatigue fed by continually bailing water from the boat, they lasted four to six days. Sure of death if they continued thus, they voted again. This time they opted to take their chances on shore with the natives.⁹

Crews had trouble getting to shore. After their 1802 wreck, the *Betsey*'s crew avoided going to shore for seven days, but the pummeling surf had destroyed all their provisions. After a week without water, two men lowered the long boat and set out for

⁸ Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 2, 8. Though the event is mentioned in Gillian Weiss' dissertation, she does not disclose what became of these men. Likely, sources are not forthcoming about the men once they disappeared from the African coast. Gillian Lee Weiss, "Back from Barbary: Captivity, Redemption, and French Identity in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Mediterranean" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford, 2002).

⁹ The American ship *Commerce* wrecked in 1817. At least Riley alluded to this fear, though it may have been a writing ploy. It is unclear exactly how many days Riley's crew spent in their long boat, especially since Riley and seaman Robbins gave differing reports of this event. They appear to have been in their long boat between four and six days. James Riley, "Riley's Narrative: Manuscript," [1817] New-York Historical Society Special Collections, 8-9, 12-13; also see King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 325, n. 4.

shore to find some. They never returned. Two days later, the rest of the thirsty men limped into the surf. Enfeebled by deprivation, the mate drowned. The captain died the next day from “weakness and fatigue.” In 1810, the *Charles*’ crew lowered their long boat immediately after they wrecked, but the surf swept the crew out of the boat leaving them to swim to shore as best they could. Riley and his crew constructed a hawser, or ropes secured to the wreck and to shore. The crew clung to the ropes, partially swimming and partially pulling themselves to shore. Saugnier’s crewmates tried to create a hawser, but the rope was torn from the mate’s hands as he swam to shore.¹⁰

Once sailors won their way to shore, they were confronted with a formidable environment: tall cliffs culminating in a boundless and bare desert. Riley and Saugnier both described scaling rock cliffs only to face an immense plain covered in white sand. The *Sophia*’s crew “little imagined that so barren a soil” could be inhabited until they saw, to their surprise, a figure coming towards them on the sand.¹¹ This setting furnished no fresh water, food, or clear direction.

¹⁰ The *Betsey* and *Charles* were both American ships. Once on shore, Saugnier’s crewmate was captured by Africans. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 28 March 1803, Reel 2, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Robert Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, An American Sailor, Who Was Wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa in the Year 1810* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, Sold by M. Carey and Son, 1817), 31; Riley, MSS, 6; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 12.

¹¹ Featuring a desert climate and little rain, the Western Sahara has only 0.02% arable land. Today, the Arab and Berber inhabitants make their living from pastoral nomadism, fishing, and phosphate mining. Southern Morocco is similarly difficult to cultivate since “almost constant wind caused the sands to shift and made cultivation extremely difficult.” Moroccans similarly practice pastoral nomadism today, as well as cultivation of argan, a tree that grows only in southwestern Morocco and whose fruit can be eaten or pressed for oil. In the eighteenth century, Moroccans exported ostrich feathers, gum, and grain, cultivated north of Mogador. James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Brig*

Most shipwrecked men knew that the natives of this intimidating coast plundered wrecks and enslaved survivors. Captain Paddock of the *Oswego* had read about the wreck and enslavement of another captain, Captain Delano, but Paddock hoped he and his men would fare better. He anticipated that the “inhabitants” had, since Delano’s wreck, been “humanized, by means of their greater intercourse with Christians in trading towns.” The inhabitants, it turned out, still enslaved wreck victims.¹²

Though most who collided with this coast were enslaved by natives, one English crew traversed the desert unmolested. Usually the Arab or Berber groups, “Bendetti” as Consul James Simpson called them, “who frequent rather than Inhabit that dangerous Coast,” kept careful watch for stranded ships, but observers missed this particular crew. The crew headed generally north up the coast, which, they knew, would take them to Mogador, where European consuls would care for them and send them home. They saw no one on their fifteen day journey, during which they suffered greatly though perhaps no more than Westerners under a master’s care. Fortunately for them, they landed near Cape Nun, only about eighty miles from Mogador. They had a relatively short desert trek

Commerce (New York: T. & W. Mercein, 1817), 14-17; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 356; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 3; Daniel J. Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira: Urban Society and Imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 8, 101, 105; “Geography and Map of Western Sahara” (About, Inc. a New York Times Company, accessed 30 June 2006), available from <http://geography.about.com/library/cia/blewsahara.htm>, p. 2-4 of 6; Laurence Livernais-Saettel, “Argan Oil” (Mulhouse, France: L. Livernais-Saettel, 2000, accessed 11 July 2006), available from <http://dietobio.com/aliments.en/argan.html>, p. 1 of 4; “Argane: An Extraordinary Tree,” (Casablanca, Morocco: Rol-Hazan, accessed 11 July 2006), available from <http://www.arganoil.com/old/welcome.html>.

¹² Paddock had read of Captain H. Delano and his crew’s wreck on this coast, and their ransom by the English consul at Mogador. Paddock, *Narrative of the Oswego*, 32, 49.

although they contended with the Atlas Mountains between Santa Cruz and Mogador without native guidance or sustenance.¹³

Most shipwrecked men were saved from a dry desert death by enslavement. Beached on a little known, barren coast, they had little chance of surviving the brutal Saharan conditions without aid. Their great need put them between the proverbial rock and hard spot. They desperately required assistance to survive, but help came in the form of enslavement. A master provided at least minimal food and water, which he knew how and where to procure, for his slaves. For this reason, the *Commerce*'s crew, on their second landing, dreaded yet prayed for enslavement. Riley and his men could easily have driven off the "creatures" who enslaved them, but considering "that we had no possible means of escaping by land or water," they decided to submit to their fate.¹⁴

The "creatures" approaching wrecked Westerners were Arabs or the "Arabized Berbers" who thinly populated the Western Sahara. Under no state's control—then or now—they were predominantly Sunni Muslim, Arabic-speaking pastoralists who moved with their livestock from winter to summer pastures.¹⁵ Referred to by Westerners as

¹³ It took the English crew fifteen days from their wreck to reach the province of Haha, which is south of Mogador (modern day Essaouira). Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 27 March 1806, 14 July 1800, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

¹⁴ In northwest Africa, as Robbins wrote, "The slave is safe in the hands of his master." Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Con., James Riley, Master, upon the Western Coast of Africa, August 28th, 1815: also of the slavery and sufferings of the author and the Rest of the Crew, upon the Desert of Zahara...*, 3rd ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1818), 44, 59; Riley, *Loss of the Commerce*, 7, 18.

¹⁵ Historian John Mercer believes that Captain Riley accurately described the Saharawi, who live in the Western Sahara, and their environment. Like Morocco just to its north,

“wild Arabs” or “wandering Arabs,” they seemed less civilized to Westerners than settled or “trading Arabs,” who, by virtue of their settled lifestyle and capitalistic pursuits, were considered more advanced. As Archibald Robbins noticed, several groups or tribes frequented the coastal areas, all of whom eagerly seized the opportunity to plunder Western ships and enslave the survivors.¹⁶

Westerners and their Arabized-Berber captors communicated in signs, through translators, or bits of each other’s languages. At first contact, Riley signaled his submission when he “bowed...to the ground...with signs” that “implored” the Africans’ compassion. Robbins first master used signs and gestures to tell Robbins to work and

the Western Sahara had, and has, a “relatively homogenous population” of Arabic and Berber speakers, most of whom were Sunni Muslims. Most Moroccans recognized the Maliki school of jurisprudence, but customary law “prevailed among” Berber groups. Jews made up a small minority of the population. Only 5-10% of the population lived in towns. Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 75, 78, 99, 127-128; Mohammed El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Mawlay Sulayman* (Cambridgeshire: Middle Eastern and North African Studies Press Ltd., 1990), 4-6; Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, “Slavery and Muslim Jurisprudence in Morocco,” in Suzanne Miers and Martin A. Klein (eds.), *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1999), 62. Brett and Fentress discuss Berbers as pastoralists practicing transhumance, or regularly moving their livestock from summer to winter pastures. Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress, *The Berbers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 203, 223.

¹⁶ Consul Matra referred to “wild Arabs” many times. See, for example, Matra to Portland, Tangier, 31 October 1795, FO 52/11 CUST, PRO Morocco, 48; Judah Paddock to William Shaler, 16 September 1819, Shaler Family Papers, 1797-1903, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1819, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Schroeter described these “trading Arabs” as peddlers linking town and country in the nineteenth century. Schroeter, *Merchants*, 85-91; Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 96.

what work to do. Cochelet and his crewmates developed a “singular language” in which they bellowed like an ox or grunted like a pig when they were hungry.¹⁷

While gesturing and signing conveyed some meanings, Western slaves generally did not comprehend their masters at first. However, most Westerners claimed that they quickly learned enough to understand their masters. Sailors may have excelled at picking up foreign languages; in fact, many claimed to know more than one other language prior to their African enslavement. Previously captured by a French privateer, for example, Captain Riley learned to read, write, and speak French and Spanish while imprisoned in France, and he argued that knowing these languages helped him learn Arabic words faster than his crewmen. Riley’s self-proclaimed proficiency in Arabic is suspicious. He claimed early in his narrative to have “learned many word in their language already.” After he so informed the reader, however, he described using signs and stones to negotiate with his master, Hamet.¹⁸

¹⁷ Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 65; Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 69; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 23.

¹⁸ As previously discussed, crews on American ships were mixed, so sailors must have devised some way of communicating with fellow crewmembers. Paddock’s crew, for example, included two Danes and two Swedes. Cathcart also knew Spanish and French prior to his Algerian capture. Captain Horton of the *Charles* spoke French prior to wrecking, also. Since Riley’s crew could “not understand a syllable of what” the Arabs said, they refused to believe that Riley “was able to communicate with them at all.” The Arabs probably used Hassaniya Arabic. Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 89; Riley, MSS, 30-31; Riley, 1817, *Loss of Commerce*, 17, 30, 79, 103; James L. Cathcart, *Account of Captivity 1785*, The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, D.C., 30; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 32; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 110; Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 125, 136-138.

Desert Arabs often knew Spanish due to an active Spanish presence on and near the Canaries. In 1814, Arabs in one coastal town enslaved a Spanish crew of seventeen; as a result, many acquired some Spanish words. Some townsmen spoke only “coarse and most vulgar words” apparently uttered by the unfortunate slaves while they were enslaved in the town. One woman spoke Spanish well enough that she and Riley could converse in a mix of broken Arabic and equally broken Spanish. Meanwhile, an “old Moor” used his broken English to translate for the British crew held near him.¹⁹

Westerners perhaps felt more pressure to communicate with their masters than vice versa. Captain Paddock picked up enough to puzzle out what was said by his captors, which, he argued, “every intelligent man” in his situation would do. “Because almost every thing respecting his welfare” depended on doing so, he learned “to understand and to speak the words...astonishingly fast.” After almost four years, Adams used the “Moorish tongue” exclusively; he spoke a mix of Arabic and broken English when ransomed.²⁰ Sailor Robbins was “mortified...[to] find [he] conversed so

¹⁹ Later, Riley met a young Arab who spoke several words of English; his vocabulary amounted to a “considerable list of curses.” Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 102; Riley, MSS, 51, 70; *Narrative of Surprise*, 39.

²⁰ Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 292. Scott knew Arabic “tolerably well.” Thomas Stewart Traill and William Lawson, “Account of the Captivity of Alexander Scott...” *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* 4, no. 7 (January, 1821): 46. Adams, claimed his ghost writer, spoke “the Negro language,” which he had learned, reasoned the narrator, from the African slaves with whom he had spent most of his time. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 36, 119.

imperfectly in the English language” because he had spoken nothing but Arabic for almost two years.²¹

Enslaved only four months, Captain Paddock knew Arabic only superficially, and relied on a Jewish interpreter to converse with his former master while in Mogador.

Those who interpreted for Westerners and their masters were usually long-time Western slaves. A Spanish boy enslaved for five years translated, or mis-translated according to the Englishmen, for an English crew in Wadinoon. After several years of enslavement, two of the four British boys from the *Martin Hall* spoke perfect Arabic, and they interpreted for their master and Paddock. One of the boys, Jack, used his knowledge of Arabic to inform Paddock and other Western slaves of their master’s plans.²²

²¹ A Spanish man enslaved for eight years and ransomed out with Robbins “could not speak his native tongue,” and two English natives of Gibraltar had also “acquired the language” by the time they were redeemed. Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 349, 240; Tangier, 28 October 1806, Despatches from the United States Consuls in Tangiers, 1797-1906, NARA.

²² The British ship *Martin Hall* wrecked in 1799. A Spanish slave interpreted for the *Surprise*’s crew in Elinegh, as well. *Narrative of the Surprise*, 30, 33. Both boys, Jack and Laura, had suspect ties to their master, Ahamed. Laura slept in Ahamed’s tent from time to time while Jack refused to return to England when redeemed; rather, he turned Turk and remained in Africa. Laura snooped and listened to their master’s conversations, and then reported what he heard to Paddock. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 292-293, 14, 111, 220, 247, 249-250. The August 2006 issue of *Slavery and Abolition* discussed the uses and experiences of child slaves. See, for example, Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, “Children in European Systems of Slavery: Introduction,” *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 2 (August 2006).

“Safe in the hands of the master”²³: The Route to Redemption

Shipwrecked Americans sought safe return to their homes while their African masters desired profit from ransoming their Western slaves. In other words, master and slave had the same goal: the slave's redemption. Africans could make a tidy sum from selling or redeeming their Western slaves, especially as they had few expenses to figure against their profit. Taken as booty plundered from a wreck by their first masters, Western slaves were a commodity gained with little outlay of capital. A master had only to keep his Western slave alive to realize a return on the bit of food and water expended on him. In the meantime, African masters might extract labor from their Western slaves depending on their need and their slaves' condition.

A Western slave relied on his master to keep him alive through desert and mountains, and, hopefully, get him close enough to open redemption negotiations with Europeans. Western slaves wanted to get to Mogador, present-day Essaouira, because most Europeans living in southern Morocco lived there. A relatively “large, uniform and well-built town,” Mogador was constructed by Moroccan Emperor Sidi Muhammad bin Abdallah in 1764 in an effort to encourage and control trade between Europeans and Moroccans. By the late eighteenth century, Mogador served as the “main entrepôt for the trans-Saharan trade.” By imperial decree, Europeans in southern Morocco could trade and live only in Mogador. The Emperor forbade foreigners from participating in interior

²³ Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 44.

markets as a way of limiting foreign influence and keeping firm control of trade in his imperial port. Subsequent rulers similarly controlled trade in and out of Mogador.²⁴

Though Europeans living and trading in southwestern Morocco were confined to Mogador, an occasional European traveled to Santa Cruz, a small town just south of Mogador, to conduct trade. Though the Emperor and his troops were some distance away, the Emperor would eventually get word of a maverick European in his interior, making this a risky maneuver. Western businessmen probably preferred Mogador, which was the regional center for trade, internal and external. Peddlers and “riding merchants” moved constantly between the city and its hinterlands taking goods to and from on donkeys and camels.²⁵

Most Westerners wrecked near Cape Bojador, which put them approximately five hundred and fifty miles from Mogador. Riley and his crew were an exception; they floated further south in their longboat, and ended up near Cape Barbas, an additional two

²⁴ Mogador, which was about one hundred and fifty miles from Tangier, was the “most active seaport in Morocco” between 1770 and 1870. Sub-Saharan caravans terminated here, and trade from interior cities and towns, including items from Marrakech, ended up here. Internal trade far outstripped export trade. Thus, the Moroccan emperor and government gained far more income from taxing Morocco’s interior than from custom duties and other fees collected at ports. El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Sulayman*, 10, 4, 58-59, 61; Schroeter, *Merchants*, xi, 2-7; Daniel Schroeter, “The Town of Mogador (Essaouira) and Aspects of Change in Pre-Colonial Morocco: A Bibliographic Essay,” *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 6, no. 1 (1979): 24.

²⁵ According to Lempriere, the factory at Mogador had “dozens” of mercantile houses representing different nations. In 1812, twelve Jewish trading houses were in Mogador, up from two in 1805. At the same time, European trading houses declined from six to four. Schroeter found six European merchant houses present in 1805 and two Jewish, but by 1828, only one European house (Renshaw and Willshire) and nine Jewish. Lempriere, *A Tour From Gibraltar*, 60; El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Sulayman*, 44; Schroeter, *Merchants*, 2-7, 19, 24, 73, 86-93.

hundred miles from Mogador. To ransom Riley and his crew, their captors would have to trek more than seven hundred miles, mostly through desert. This was a long, dangerous journey, and keeping oneself alive on such a grueling passage was challenging even for the indigenous peoples. Not all masters wanted the bother of taking Western slaves to Mogador even if the wreck was close and the ransom offered tremendous.²⁶

Masters undertaking a journey to Mogador were confronted with the normal desert dangers, and the added danger of attackers bent on stealing their Western slaves. Masters chose routes to avoid such theft. Paddock reported that this anxiety “rendered our journey so much the more uncomfortable to us, as we had so often to exchange a good path for a bad one.”²⁷ To avoid theft, a master might choose a route without regular stops even though these places provided provisions and water. This increased the journey’s peril, posing health risks to master and slave.

Always wary of potential thieves, African masters were guarded with those they encountered. Alexander Scott’s master never pitched his tents close to passing groups. Scott believed his master feared theft, but they also had no water or food to share with those they met on the road. Masters found that caution was always warranted because

²⁶ For a discussion of the tribal group holding Riley and de Brisson, the Oulad Bou Sbaa, see King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 54, 126-127, 138, 328 n. 1.

²⁷ Traveling from Wadinoon to Mogador, Hector Black found his masters used “no kind of road, but merely tracks.” These may have been the only paths available, or his master may have chosen out-of-way paths to avoid bandits stealing his English slaves. Paddock, *Narrative of the Oswego*, 194; *Narrative of the Shipwreck “Surprise” of Glasgow, John William Ross, Master, On the Coast of Barbary, on the 28th of December 1815 and the Subsequent Captivity of the Passengers and Crew by the Arabs until Ransomed by the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers* (London: Printed by the order of the court for the use of the livery of the company, by Gye and Balne, 1817), 31.

threats might not be obvious. Riley and his group were warmly welcomed at one village where villagers slaughtered and shared a camel with them. That night, however, one man warned Riley's master of impending attack. The others planned to seize Riley and the other Western slaves. Riley's master moved on immediately, and subsequently avoided watering holes and any place other people congregated. The cost of this decision was high. Without water, even his camels died on their march to Mogador.²⁸

Getting to Mogador with live Western slaves was uncertain, and not all Africans undertook the risk. Africans who salvaged Westerners from the sea extracted some labor from their slaves, but sold them as soon as a small profit could be made. They rarely ferried their slaves to Mogador. Africans near the coast knew their Western slaves were valuable commodities, but may not have known the "value of a Christian slave, as an object of ransom." One of Adams' masters "seemed to be wholly ignorant" of his worth, which caused him to sell Adams for less than Adams thought he could have gotten.²⁹

Because Africans were quick to sell them when they could do so for a profit, Western slaves changed hands frequently in northwest Africa. The English boy Jack, enslaved for at least a year, reported that he and other crewmembers had often been bought and sold among the Arabs. During roughly three months of slavery, Riley was owned by five masters. Robbins, enslaved for about nineteen months, was also owned by five masters. While Paddock had two masters in four months of slavery, Robert Adams had only three masters in more than three years of slavery. John Hill, one of Paddock's

²⁸ Traill and Lawson, "Account of Scott," 44; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 62.

²⁹ Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 66.

Oswego crew, had, in almost two years of slavery, been “sold very often, carried from place to place, and used very cruelly.”³⁰

Westerners termed Berber and Arab businessmen with some wealth “trading Arabs,” and these men were more likely to take Western slaves to Mogador than were other Africans. Trading Arabs moved around, carrying goods on regular circuits between town and village markets. They had goods, money, or credit enough to buy several Western slaves, thereby maximizing the possible profit from a trip to Mogador. Hamet acquired Riley and five crewmen from the *Commerce* while a “Moor” obtained Saugnier and five of his companions. Ahamed, who carried Paddock and several others to Mogador, claimed he bought in bulk to rid the “country of all you Christian dogs at once.” Yet Ahamed’s interest, like the other Africans’, was more likely the money to be made ransoming several Western slaves.³¹

Trading Arabs traveled widely and regularly to conduct their business. They used each trip to Mogador to its best advantage, buying and selling commodities as they moved toward the port with their Western commodities. One of Adams’ masters moved in what Adams saw as a painfully slow and roundabout way to Mogador, but his master

³⁰ Jack was a cabin boy on the *Martin Hall* of London when it wrecked more than a year prior to the *Oswego*’s wreck. According to Jack, one of the crew had been killed by a native, the Captain had drowned, some of the crew had been ransomed, but four were still with the Arabs. Hill, Samuel Brown and Hans Wilson had chosen to stay at the wreck whereas Paddock and other men had gone looking for water or for native help. In 1805, Paddock ran into John Hill in New York. Simpson, the American consul in Morocco, had information about Hill and Brown in September 1802. Paddock, *Narrative of the Oswego*, 221, 98, 134; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 3 September 1802, 7 June 1800, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

³¹ Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43; Paddock, *Narrative of the Oswego*, 133; Riley, MSS, 31-32.

took this route to hawk and buy goods at every small town and village they passed.

Trading Arabs purchased Western slaves as merely one among many commodities that they carried to Mogador. Often trading Arabs bought and redeemed more than one Western slave, or were serial owners of Western slaves. Perhaps their familiarity with regional trade patterns and other businessmen, including Europeans, as well as with the system of redemption, encouraged them to include Western slaves among the trade goods with which they dealt. Robbins believed that his master Bel Cossim's wealth derived from buying Western slaves at low prices and then ransoming them high. Bel Cossim certainly had owned several Western slaves over time.³²

Some African masters stopped short of Mogador, waiting instead at the town of Wadinoon, which was about two hundred miles or a week's journey from Mogador. From their perspective, Wadinoon had several advantages over Mogador as a negotiation site. Wadinoon served as a marketplace for African trade crisscrossing northwest Africa. Sailor Archibald Robbins reported that the town's one hundred and fifty families could purchase virtually anything from the regular Sunday markets or from one of the several markets that were held near the town.³³

³² Adams' master at this point was Abdallah Houssa. Alex Scott was also bought by an Arab who purchased most of his crew. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 69; Traill and Lawson, "Account of Scott," 39. Peddlers carefully planned their itineraries through the desert, and their travels provided a link between town and country markets. Schroeter, *Merchants*, 85, 89.

³³ Along with the hundred and fifty families in Mogador, Robbins counted one hundred black slaves. Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 199, 223.

Many trading Arabs had business and family ties in Wadinoon, another reason they preferred this town. Cochelet's master resided here, and Hamet, who owned Riley, had a wife and family in town. However, family ties led Hamet to avoid Wadinoon. He believed his father-in-law, the town's governor, would force him to sell his Western slaves to pay a debt Hamet owed him. Bel Cossim, the wealthy owner of Adams and Robbins, had a home and farm in Wadinoon.³⁴

Lastly, Wadinoon was just outside the Moroccan government's jurisdiction, which ended around Santa Cruz (Agadir), which was about eighty miles from Mogador. Emperor Muwlay Sulayman could not collect taxes south of Santa Cruz because southern tribes did not recognize his sovereignty. Tribal chieftains and religious leaders acted with "unlimited power" in whatever area they could control, and were often fermenting unrest in attempts to bring larger areas under their influence. When Adams complained of inhumane treatment in Wadinoon, the governor of Santa Cruz informed him that the inhabitants "were savages, and not subjects of the Emperor."³⁵

³⁴ Riley, MSS, 83; Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce...* 13th ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1821), 199, 223; Simpson to the Secretary of State, 8 February 1819, Despatches Tangier, NARA. Cochelet rendered the name of the town in French, "Oudnoun." Located on the River Noun and within two hundred miles of Mogador, this appears to be Wadinoon. Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 62, 65-66, 58; Schroeter, *Merchants*, xvii.

³⁵ Muwlay Sulayman ruled Morocco from 1766-1822. A few European merchants resided in Santa Cruz, though Mogador was overwhelmingly the location of American and English redemption. The sheikh who ruled Wadinoon had agents in Essaouira to market their goods to Europeans. El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Sulayman*, 18; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 220-221; Schroeter, *Merchants*, 161. Adams quoted in Paul Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 23. The Moroccan

Wadinoon, then, was as close as one could get to Mogador while avoiding Morocco's legal authority. Any closer and the Emperor might lay claim to Western slaves, requiring an owner to hand them over with no guaranteed reimbursement. Since the Emperor did not control Wadinoon, his agents could merely negotiate for Westerners' release there, not dictate their release. Since the Moroccan government had treaties with several Western countries that promised safe passage for those countries' citizens, the Emperor employed agents in the south to retrieve enslaved Westerners. The Emperor's agents parleyed for the *Association*'s crew when the ship wrecked near Cape Blanc in 1806, and again in 1808 for some of the *Indefatigable*'s crew.³⁶

On the downside, Wadinoon was close enough to Mogador that Western slaves sometimes tried to make the two hundred miles to Mogador on their own. Though an American and an Englishman did successfully make this trek in 1814, it was an uncommon and unlikely feat.³⁷ Western slaves had little knowledge of the environment, and the Atlas Mountains stood in the way. Lest they be re-enslaved, they would have to avoid the heavy local traffic on roads and several well-populated towns between Wadinoon and Mogador.

Emperor had no power east of Tetuan, either. James Matra to Lord Sydney, Tangier, 28 March 1789, PRO Morocco FO 52/8, 45; *Narrative of Surprise*, 36.

³⁶ The *Association* was a British ship, while the *Indefatigable* was an American vessel. James Green to William Windham, Tangier, 20 Oct 1806, PRO Morocco FO 52/13, 66.

³⁷ Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 133; Robbins, 13th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 216; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 220.

Owners watched their Western slaves more carefully the closer they drew to Wadinoon, because they worried their slaves might bolt or fellow desert-dwellers might take them. Robbins's master, anxious that bandits might steal Robbins, forced a fast pace around Wadinoon and set a watch on Robbins. Riley and those with him were closely guarded night and day to prevent theft. When Adams, frustrated with his master's meandering pace, set out on his own, his master dreaded that he had been stolen. His trackers were pleased to find him the next day "on foot and alone" and not in the hands of another Arab hoping to make a profit in Mogador.³⁸

Despite the small risk of runaways, almost all Western slaves were eventually brought to Wadinoon or its vicinity. Once here, Western slaves and their masters could make contact with Western consuls or their agents. Those "in the Country" were out of reach, too far for aid or attempts to free them. Seaman Adams spent almost four years of slavery deep in Africa's interior and far from Wadinoon, for example. On the other hand, Consul Simpson considered it "fortunate" that Paddock and many of his crew were "so speedily" brought to Wadinoon. According to Simpson, conditions in the interior were "shocking beyond description," and it was virtually impossible to locate and help Westerners there, let alone ransom them.³⁹

³⁸ Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 232; Riley, MSS, 68-69, 73; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 1817, 69-70.

³⁹ Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 June 1800, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

“I was shipwrecked...intercede for me”⁴⁰: Making Contact

Wadinoon and its vicinity served as a meeting ground to arrange the redemption of Western slaves. The slaves, their owners, and Western consuls passed letters and information back and forth through agents hired by the Emperor, the consuls, or even by African masters wishing to speed the ransom of their slaves. Like Algerian masters, these African masters wanted their slaves to communicate with outsiders, and they facilitated this when they could. In 1791, English consul James Matra sent ink and paper to the *Prosperous*'s crew in Wadinoon. Their owner did not interfere with this gift, though he might have confiscated clothing or shoes sent to his slaves. In fact, he probably welcomed these materials. While in Santa Cruz, Paddock's master ordered him to write to the English consul in Mogador on the only paper available, recycled from the wrecked Spanish schooner *Maria*.⁴¹

In Africa, masters encouraged their slaves to write pathetic letters to those who might procure their freedom. Riley and Robbins were both directed to write to consuls in Mogador, and Hector Black of the British ship *Surprise* eagerly acted on such an order from his master. Likewise, Captain Seavers of the *Indefatigable* wrote a nearly eight page letter from Wadinoon soliciting assistance from the British consul. These letters

⁴⁰ Excerpt of letter from Thomas Davies in letter from William Willshire, quoted in Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 10 August 1816, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

⁴¹ Matra to Dundass, Tangier, 2 July 1791, PRO Morocco FO 52/10, 112; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 247.

served as a first step in redemption negotiations, and both slave and master were eager for them to be sent.⁴²

Reaching any Western consul would do because the agents would usually aid any European or American victims. However, masters and slaves knew that while not all countries maintained a consul or agent in Mogador, the English did. Because the English had paid to release their countrymen for many decades, African masters trusted that English citizens would be redeemed fairly easily and swiftly. Knowing this and that the English had a very strong trading presence on the northwest African coast, many enslaved Westerners claimed they were English whether they were or not. Paddock, captain of the first American ship wrecked on this coast, knew of no American agents in Mogador. He was certain British agents were there; therefore, he told his crew to claim British citizenship as an inducement to their masters to carry them to Mogador. The French Cochelet, also unsure of other Europeans' presence on the coast, addressed his letter to an English consul.⁴³

Some left their letters open-ended. Sailor Thomas Davies sent a general plea for help. He wrote, "I am an American, I was shipwrecked...intercede for me as soon as possible, for I am in a very bad state." Captain Riley covered all of his bases with his

⁴² Seavers' letter was dated Wadinoon, 19 March 1806. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 May 1806, Despatches Tangier, NARA. A Moor holding Saugnier and five of his companions also arranged for them to send a letter to Mogador rather than awaiting a Western-sent agent's arrival. Robbins, owned by wealthy Berber El'ajjah Mahomet, was held one hundred and thirty miles north of Wadinoon. Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43; Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 236; Riley, MSS, 68; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 309-310, 254-257; *Narrative of the "Surprise,"* 31.

⁴³ Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 49; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 66.

letter. It was addressed to any English, French, Spanish or American consuls or Western merchants in Mogador. He purposefully failed to mention his nationality knowing no American agents were there and hoping any Westerners would help him.⁴⁴

Stuck in Mogador by imperial decree, Western consuls sent native agents to Wadinoon and its vicinity to locate enslaved Westerners and negotiate for their release. British consuls, who were best represented in early nineteenth-century Mogador, constantly shelled out money to agents to carry letters and information, conduct Western slaves to the port, and carry material goods to slaves in Wadinoon.⁴⁵ The activities of these agents suggest a dense network among those in northwest Africa, and the desire to ransom Western slaves with alacrity.

One such agent carried a letter to Adams in Wadinoon. Neither Adams nor his master was surprised by the letter, which informed Adams of his impending ransom. Adams' master, Abdallah Houssa, advised Adams that the British consul usually sent

⁴⁴ Thomas Davies was on the Baltimore ship *Romp* when the Spanish took it as a prize, and then wrecked on the coast of Africa in May 1816. He was ransomed in Mogador four days before Robbins. Excerpt of letter from Thomas Davies to William Willshire, quoted in Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 10 August 1816, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 212; Riley, MSS, 69.

⁴⁵ Since he had less control south of Mogador, the Moroccan Emperor also employed agents around Wadinoon. His agents were to bring Christian slaves to him, which an agent did with most of the *Indefatigable*'s crew in 1808. The Emperor directed his agents to do similarly for the British ship *Prosperous*. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 14 April 1808, Despatches Tangier, NARA. See, for example, monies required for redemption of *Prosperous*'s crew. Matra to Dundass, Tangier, 2 July 1791, PRO Morocco, FO52/10, 112; Matra to Dundass, Gibraltar, 15 April 1792, PRO Morocco, FO52/10, 217; "Presents to Governor of Wadinoon" and "Accounts for Redeeming the Brig *Prosperous*," James Matra to Dundass, Tangier, 5 October 1792, PRO Morocco, FO 52/10, 233-242.

agents to Wadinoon to obtain Western slaves there. Robbins also received a consular letter delivered by an agent while in Wadinoon. The letter was addressed to any Western slaves, not specifically to Robbins himself. British consuls, keen on getting Westerners out of slavery, made constant efforts to locate Westerners, and this generic letter attests to their determination to do so.⁴⁶

Agents carried more than information and letters. They provided much-needed supplies for the enslaved, as well. When initially captured, Westerners were stripped of their clothing, which their captors used or sold. Western slaves were left minimally clothed with leftover bits of clothing and cloth. After Robbins's trousers were confiscated, he was handed eighteen-inch-wide strips of blanket and thorns with which to cover himself. A shipmate's African mistress used the ship's flag to fashion a shirt, which, Robbins confessed, "made me smile." In 1773, the British consul charged an agent to locate any survivors of the *Betsey* held in Wadinoon. When some were found there, the agent departed with clothing and other "necessaries" for them.⁴⁷ Similarly, once Cochelet made contact with the French vice consul in Mogador, he sent a Jewish agent with a letter and shoes.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 69; Robbins, 13th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 230.

⁴⁷ The *Betsey* wrecked in 1773 going from "Santa Croos bound to Cape Devardo," and most of her crew ended up in Wadinoon. Robbins, 5th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 66; Robbins, 13th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 122-123; Charles Logie to the Emperor of Morocco, 15 August 1773, PRO Morocco FO 52/3, 82; Logie to the Earl of Rockford, Gibraltar, 6 September 1773, PRO Morocco FO 52/3, 78, 86.

⁴⁸ Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 70, 78-79, 83, 94. This Jewish agent may have been native to North Africa or had European ties. Many Jews fleeing Spain and Portugal in

Western consuls were driven to clothe Western slaves properly lest the slaves “turn Turk” once accustomed to African ways. Many believed that Western clothing, as well as using one’s native tongue, helped slaves retain their Western identities, and resist African culture and religion. For this reason, Consul Matra complained when could get nothing but “Moorish tunicks” to send six Englishmen in Santa Cruz. He also worried that their African masters would seize the tunics for themselves, and then keep or sell them. Though he sent the tunics, he insisted that proper trousers and clothing be ordered and sent as soon as possible.⁴⁹

Consuls gave their agents wide latitude to redeem Westerners, and agents traveled widely and frequently to do so. In an attempt to find the last men from Riley’s crew, James Simpson sent a “Moor” to “pursue his inquiries...as far as the country of the Wadelim” and “to establish their Redemption” if possible. An agent escorting Adams from Wadinoon to Mogador diverted to a nearby town when he heard that a Western

the fifteenth century settled in Morocco, particularly in ports and trading centers where they engaged in trade. In Essaouira, where many moved in the late eighteenth century to specialize in the export-import trade, Jews made up 30-40% of the population. Not all Moroccan Jews lived in ports: some called Wadinoon or other rural towns home. Sultan Muhammad “entrusted Jewish merchants” with monopolies on some products and used “them on political missions abroad.” Schroeter, *Merchants*, xv, 15, 18-19, 34, 56-57; El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Sulayman*, 14-15, 44.

⁴⁹ In 1792, Consul Matra sent clothing and shoes worth £680 to the *Prosperous*’s crew in Wadinoon. Matra to Portland, Tangier, 20 December 1795, PRO Morocco, FO 52/11, 54; Matra to Dundass, Tangier, 5 October 1792, PRO Morocco 52/10, 235.

slave was held there. He tried, unsuccessfully, to ransom Adams's shipmate, Martin Clark.⁵⁰

French and English merchants at Mogador heard that Saugnier was enslaved from "the different brokers that commerce obliged them to disperse around the country." Once the French consul located Saugnier, he sent a letter carried by a Moorish agent. The agent was charged with delivering the letter, purchasing Saugnier and his companions, and bringing them to Mogador.⁵¹

Seven days after sending a letter to Mogador from Wadinoon, Riley received an answer from Consul William Willshire. Bel Cossim, an agent Willshire often employed, carried his response. According to Riley, Bel Cossim had traveled to Europe several times as the captain of a grain-carrying ship. This experience acquainted him with European trading practices, and perhaps with European contacts who might vouch for him. In his letter Willshire assured Riley that Bel Cossim could be trusted. Willshire

⁵⁰ Riley had last seen the missing men in the "Wadelims country." Hired by Joseph Dupuis, this agent tried to purchase Martin Clark, a black crewman from the *Charles*, but Clark's master refused to sell him. By 1814, Clark had been redeemed. James Simpson to William Shaler, Tangier, 28 February 1817, Box 1, Folder Correspondence 1817, William Shaler Papers, 1794-1932, HSP; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 13, 141.

⁵¹ Most of the agents were indigenous, though some information about Saugnier may have passed through John Foxcroft, an English trader who lived briefly in Santa Cruz. Paddock took tea with Foxcroft and his wife in Mogador after he was redeemed in 1800. The agent purchased Saugnier and five men with him, and then returned with them to Mogador. Matra to Portland, Tangier, 24 March 1796, PRO Morocco, FO 52/11 54; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 294; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43.

seemed to have confidence in the man; he used him as an agent again and again. Bel Cossim's repeated service also indicates that the role must have been lucrative.⁵²

Some African owners made contact with consuls directly, rather than working through an agent. The "proprietor" of three men from the *Charles*, for instance, arrived in Mogador himself "to treat for their redemption." Western agents may have failed to locate this man and his slaves. Conversely, they may have been cutting out the middle man, so they could more closely direct negotiations.⁵³

Agents could certainly make money carrying goods, letters, and Western slaves to and fro in northwest Africa. In 1792, English Consul James Matra compensated "Hazan Massoud for his trouble" for purchasing Captain Driver of the *Prosperous* and for expenses incurred while maintaining the English crew during their "stay" at Wadinoon. Massoud earned a total of £2700 (approximately \$616.44 in 1792 and \$12,987 in 2005) for his exertions. Because the enslaved captain had promised money, Matra paid the "Moorish Sidi Bellel" £1500 (or about \$342.46 in 1792 and \$7,205 in 2005) for "good treatment" of four Englishmen during nineteen months he held them. Matra paid a Moor to conduct the men from Wadinoon to Santa Cruz, and to hire a mule from Santa Cruz to Mogador. In addition, he laid out £680 (\$155.25) for "sundries" and clothing for the men, £105.2 (\$24) as a present to the Governor of Wadinoon, and £1120 (\$255.70) cash to Mogador's officials for leave for the men to disembark. These fees were in addition to

⁵² Riley, MSS, 73, 81.

⁵³ This man was an Arab of the tribe "Woled Abousseh." Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 25 May 1812, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 88.

the actual ransom price. Matra figured the grand total for redeeming and maintaining nine men at £25940 (\$5922.37).⁵⁴

In 1799, British Consul Peter Gwyn was responsible for similar expenses when redeeming the *Martin Hall*'s crew. He covered their traveling costs, including mules for carrying provisions, in addition to redemption fees. He even remunerated the Governor's men to retrieve two sailors who "endeavored to escape." The English government paid £150 (about \$34.25) to ensure the two Englishmen were caught and returned to slavery.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ This sum is high—\$658 per person rather than three to four hundred—compared to other redemptions although all fees may not have been recorded in other sources. Matra was able to locate the men and send clothing to them while enslaved, which, while not unusual, was not always possible. His figures included a 3% premium charged by merchants in Gibraltar for advancing silver. This fee may have been charged routinely, but is not indicated in other available redemption cases. Simpson redeemed mate Joseph Lee for a total of \$560 in 1807, a sum not far from the average in this case. Accounts for Redemption of Brig *Prosperous*, Matra to Dundass, Tangier, 5 October 1792, PRO Morocco FO 52/10, 233-235. Monetary equivalents of historic funds are notoriously difficult to calculate. I have produced tentative equivalencies between the British Pound and U.S. Dollar based on average exchange rates given for the years 1791-1815, which equaled \$4.38 for one British Pound. "What Was the Exchange Rate Then?" from Lawrence H. Officer "Exchange Rate Between the United States Dollar and the British Pound, 1792-2004" (Economic History Services, EH.Net. 2004 accessed 12 July 2006) at <http://eh.net/hmit/exchangerates/pound.php> and <http://eh.net/hmit/exchangerates/>. British Consul Green's letter in October 1806 confirms my estimates: Matra equated \$200 with about £45 sterling. James Green to William Windham, Tangier, 20 October 1806, PRO Morocco FO 52/13, 66. Using *Measuring Worth*, I have included very rough estimates of what these sums might mean in 2005 currency. In 2005, \$616.00 might be \$12,987; \$342 about \$7,205; \$155 about \$3,265; \$24 about \$505; \$256 about \$5,393; and \$5,922 about \$124,764. "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005," *Measuring Worth* (MeasuringWorth.com, 2006 accessed 2 February 2007) at <http://measuringworth.com/calculators/compare/result.php>.

⁵⁵ The two escaping men were Michael Hamilton, seaman, and William Kerr, the mate. The *Martin Hall*'s crew was redeemed for a grand total of £14795 (or \$3,377.85). Peter Gwyn, Mogador, 31 December 1800, PRO Morocco FO 52/11, 285. \$34 in 1800 would equate to roughly \$545 in 2005, and \$3,377 about \$54,209 in 2005. "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005," *Measuring Worth*.

The American government was not so generous. In 1812, Arabs brought three of the *Charles's* crew to Mogador as commanded by the Emperor. The Emperor had arranged their ransom, but the Arabs complained that he did not reimburse them enough to cover the price they paid for the men, let alone their lost time and expenses in bringing them to Mogador. To mollify the men, James Renshaw gave each a gratuity of eight dollars on behalf of the United States. Renshaw hoped this would encourage them and other Arabs to bring wrecked Americans to Mogador speedily. Since the payment was so low compared to what other countries paid, the tips may not have had the desired effect.⁵⁶

Renshaw's underpayment may explain why Stephen Dolbins' master demanded \$200 to be paid at Wadinoon before he would release Dolbins, the former first mate of the *Charles*. After three years of slavery, Dolbins died in Wadinoon awaiting this payment. At least Simpson did not leave Joseph Lee, the *Indefatigable's* mate, to languish in slavery for much more than one year. Simpson paid \$450 for the ransom fee, with an overall disbursement of \$560.25 for his 1807 redemption.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ James Renshaw took over as British consul from Willshire in Mogador. Since there was no American consul in Mogador, Willshire and Renshaw worked on behalf of enslaved Americans as well. Simpson paid a total of \$566.25 to redeem the *Indefatigable's* mate, Joseph Lee. It is not clear who paid this sum—the government or Lee's relatives. Lee's brother offered up to \$400 if Simpson could get him out, but the records do not indicate if he paid this sum or not. King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 262; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 29 September 1812, 3 April 1813; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 129-130; James Simpson, "Names and fates of the Crew Charles of New York," 18 January 1814, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 3 June 1807, 12 June 1807, 6 March 1807, Despatches Tangier, NARA. \$8 in 1812 equates to roughly \$121 in 2005. "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005," *Measuring Worth*.

⁵⁷ King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 262; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 29 September 1812, 3 April 1813; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 129-130; James

In 1819, Lemuel Gifford's master asked for three hundred dollars plus expenses for Gifford's release. Consul Simpson refused to pay because he worried that paying such a high price would encourage others to demand similar fees for enslaved Americans. Simpson may also have paused at the price because of Gifford's rank. As an ordinary seaman, Gifford commanded a lower price than an officer in both African and Western eyes. Officers like Dolbins and Lee may have been able to raise funds for redemption charges, or others may have perceived that they could have done so. Indeed, Lee's brother offered \$400 for his release, but ordinary seamen and their families were unlikely to provide such sums. Fortunately for Gifford, his master lowered the price, and he, unlike Dolbins, lived to be ransomed. Simpson redeemed him "at last" for \$190, with an overall disbursement of \$238.95.⁵⁸

"Large Premiums Being Paid for Christians"⁵⁹: Redemption Payments

Consuls were in a precarious situation with regard to redemptions. Since they drew small salaries, they required compensation for expenditures made on behalf of those

Simpson, "Names and fates of the Crew Charles of New York," 18 January 1814, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 3 June 1807, 12 June 1807, 6 March 1807, Despatches Tangier, NARA. \$450 in 1807 translates to about \$7,846 in 2005, and \$560 to \$9,765. "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005," *Measuring Worth*.

⁵⁸ Gifford was enslaved for less than a year. The disbursement for Gifford included maintaining him and his passage to New York. Simpson to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, 18 May 1819, Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 19 September 1819, Despatches Tangier, NARA. \$239 in 1819 is about \$3,770 in 2005. "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005," *Measuring Worth*.

⁵⁹ Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 24 September 1816, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

in need. They were careful about whom they ransomed and how much they paid in order to increase their chances of being compensated. They might, for instance, carefully ascertain the nationality of a distressed seaman before they aided him. The consul was officially responsible for, and reimbursed only for, citizens of the country for whom he served as consul.

Since seamen purported to be from countries other than their own if they felt doing so would better serve their interests, identifying a seaman's nationality could be a tricky task. Sometimes consuls detected a sailor's nationality with ease, as was the case with American Captain Judah Paddock and his crew. Paddock claimed British citizenship for himself and his men. Once in Mogador, an Englishman at the British consulate immediately pegged him as an American. British Consul Gwyn still received them cordially. After all, as he told Paddock, "you are Christian, and that is enough." He would, he told Paddock, "do every thing in" his power to help them, but he was "poor" and could not "advance money" for their ransom. Other Europeans in the city might lend the Americans money, but they would ultimately need to work through American Consul Simpson in Tangiers to arrange redemption.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Similarly, Consul Willshire told Englishman Hector Black of the *Surprise* that Willshire could not advance ransom money to Black and his brother on "faith of ourselves," for which the men "could scarcely blame him" since they were "entire strangers to him" and he "looked only for reimbursement." Simpson constantly commented on how he was not paid enough to do what he needed to do in Morocco. When he died in 1819, his son petitioned for redress because his father, "after nearly 26 years" of service, "spent in a most barbarous country," had died "leaving his family in poverty." He was poor because he had to maintain, for the sake of the country he served, a lifestyle equal to his dignity and that of the United States. He left a young son and daughter "without so much as even one Cent for their support." Paddock, *Narrative of*

In other cases, consuls had to scrutinize sailors closely to identify their nationality. Consul William Jarvis made it a “rule to examine the Seamen closely,” but even so, true nationality might be hard to determine. American consular agents considered Thomas Williams an American and redeemed him for \$175. As soon as he was free, he declared residence in Bristol and claimed British protection. Consul Simpson then had to finagle money from the British for Williams’ redemption.⁶¹

Two of Williams’ crewmates further confused the issue of national identity. They were Swedes, but had “for some time navigated in Merchant vessels of the United States,” and should therefore be redeemed by the American government with the rest of the ship’s crew. Since Sweden did little for their shipwrecked men, they had little recourse but to depend on the American government. They got lucky. Because the Moroccan Emperor considered the entire crew American, he retrieved the two Swedes along with one other crewmate. Happily, the United States government paid a nominal fee of \$172.92 for the redemption of all three seamen.⁶²

Oswego, 272-274; *Surprise*, 35; John S. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 30 June 1819, 20 July 1821, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

⁶¹ William Jarvis to James Madison, Miscellaneous Despatches, 1792-1849, Despatches from Diplomatic Officers, Diplomatic Correspondence 1785-1906, RG 59, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. \$175 in 1792 was equal to about \$3,686 in 2005. “Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005,” *Measuring Worth*.

⁶² A mixed crew including Germans and French Maltese manned a Russian ship captured by Algerian corsairs in 1794. The Dey freed this crew, as he had an earlier-captured Russian crew, because the “Grand Signior...was at Peace” with Russia; therefore, he “Should equally consider himself so.” Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 26 November 1814, Despatches Tangier, NARA; James Simpson to U.S. Treasury Department, “Letter from the Secretary Transmitting a Statement in Obedience to ‘An

Even an American ship navigated by a largely American crew could pose problems, which was the case of the *Indefatigable*. Captain Benjamin Franklin Seavers purchased the ship in Gibraltar where it had been condemned as a prize to a privateer. He then headed for Cape Verde to pick up salt before returning to America. Before he left Gibraltar, Seavers failed to meet the conditions “usually deemed necessary” before “hoisting American colours”; therefore, the American consul in Gibraltar, John Gavino, refused to issue a certificate or bond to Seavers. Seavers left port anyway, navigating the ship without the papers that would “justify agreeable to Law his Navigating her” under the American flag. In other words, the *Indefatigable* lacked certification that legally marked her and her crew as American.⁶³

Unfortunately, the *Indefatigable* wrecked on the African coast during this uncertified trip. After getting a letter of “8 folio pages” from the enslaved Captain Seavers, Simpson begged the Secretary of State for “precise instructions” as to whether or not he should “obtain the release” of the men on the “Public charge.” If the men were to be redeemed by the U.S., the American government would have to recognize them as citizens with all the “benefits arriving” from that status. Captain Seavers, who admitted to sailing without proper paperwork, recognized his tenuous situation, but thought “it

Act Fixing the Compensation of Public Ministers,” 4 March 1814 (Washington, D.C.: A.&G. Ways, 1814); Simpson to the Secretary of State, Gibraltar, 3 April 1794, Simpson to Colonel Humphreys, Gibraltar, 19 June 1794, Letterbook, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 72, 82. The \$173 from 1794 would be worth \$3,644 in 2005. “Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005,” *Measuring Worth*.

⁶³ Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 May 1806, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

hard...that any deviation from a navigation act should occasion him and his fellow Sufferers being left in their present miserable situation.”⁶⁴

The “partly foreign crew,” while not uncommon on ships of this period, further complicated the situation. Though nine out of thirteen, or roughly 70% of the crew, were Americans, one crewmember came from Ragusa, one from England, and one from France. The only passenger, Jean Baptiste Barrett, claimed New Orleans as home, but Simpson and Gavino doubted his claim. Because Simpson questioned his claim to American citizenship, he may have dragged his feet about redeeming the man. By 1811, ten of the crew had been freed, two died in Africa, and only Barrett was missing.

By this time, Simpson believed that Barrett had been “an Officer” in the “early Service” of Haiti, which implied Barrett was an African or mulatto. This made it easier to relegate him to the category with African American wreck victims. Many Americans supposed that African Americans wrecking in Africa chose to stay there. Simpson, for example, was “assured” that the *Oswego*’s two African American crew members had “turned Moors, and married in the country,” an event he had “always dreaded would be their fate.” Similarly, Simpson heard that Barrett “embraced the Mohamedan Religion...some months ago,” and thereby chose to remain in Africa.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Seavers listed his crew and their origins in the letter that ended up in British Consul Gwyn’s hands. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 May 1806, 16 September 1806, 6 March 1807, 14 April 1808, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

⁶⁵ Barrett wrote a letter—in French—to the American consul at Tangier saying he was an American, a “native of Newfoundland.” Americans perceived that African Americans were seen as hardworking or worth more money by African Arabs, and therefore sold into the interior, or that they chose to stay in Africa. Paddock’s two (free) African American crew members, by “every account,” “voluntarily remained with the Arabs and

Simpson and other Westerners flinched at the thought of leaving their own white countrymen enslaved in Africa. Consuls also perceived several disadvantages to leaving (white) Westerners in these straits. Simpson worried that leaving the unfortunate Seavers and his crew in bondage might “endanger the lives and liberty of other persons who have a perfect claim up on the national protections.” According to Simpson, paying ransom fees, though expensive, was necessary to encourage “the Arabs to bring” stranded Westerners out of the desert, and “to prevent them” from “destroying or keeping in perpetual Slavery” wreck victims. In fact, one African master conveyed his English slave boy to Mogador in 1816 because he had heard reports of “large premiums being paid for Christians” there. The boy turned out to be the only unaccounted for crewmember from an 1810 English wreck.⁶⁶

If word got around the desert that Americans might not be redeemed, were redeemed at low prices, or that it was unduly difficult to collect money for them, Africans might retain them as slaves rather than try to ransom them. Knowing this, Simpson prepared to aid the *Indefatigable*’s crew as soon as he heard they had foundered. He sent \$1600 to his agent in Mogador for their relief before getting official instructions. Still

got married.” Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 27 March 1806, 8 January 1802, 3 Sept 1802, 7 May 1806, 14 April 1808, 21 February 1811, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

⁶⁶ Shaler to James Monroe, Secretary of State, U.S. Ship *Washington* Bay of Gibraltar, 13 November 1816, Diplomatic Correspondence 1785-1906, Records of Special Agents, Missions, and Commissions, Correspondence and Reports of the Diplomatic Commissions, Despatches of the United States Commissioners to Algiers, General Records of the Department of State, June 29, 1815 to January 1, 1817, vol. 1, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 28 March 1803, 24 September 1816, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

lacking official instructions, Simpson paid the Emperor of Morocco the nominal, yet required, fee for freeing five *Indefatigable* crewmembers in 1808. The U.S. government did not repay Simpson the \$424.15 he was owed for this until 1816.⁶⁷

If consuls failed to redeem stranded men, the men might arrange their own ransoms at exorbitant prices, thus pushing redemption prices higher and higher until no one could afford to pay. In fact, Captain Seavers paid \$1300 to free himself and a crewmate, a rate that far exceeded the average two hundred dollar ransom fee. Simpson fretted that this high price would increase other masters' greediness, making it harder to get other victims out at all.

Other countries cut deals that drove prices higher, as well. While enslaved in 1789, Captain James Irving reported that the French laid out \$1600 for six Frenchmen, or about \$266.66 per person. This was not much higher than the average sum offered for redemption, but it caused Irving's master to reject the English consul's much smaller offer for Irving. By 1799, high prices made it "very tedious and expensive" for the English and Spanish to redeem crews, and many had "actually perished in the Country" before they could be ransomed.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Along with five from the *Indefatigable*, the Emperor redeemed four Spanish and four Hamburgers who had sailed on other ships. If the Emperor redeemed the men, he covered their redemption. Western governments usually paid only traveling costs and gratuities. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 14 April 1808, 28 March 1803, 21 February 1811, Despatches Tangier, NARA. \$1600 in 1807 dollars would be worth \$27,900 in 2005 while \$424 in 1807 dollars would be worth \$7,393 in 2005, but \$424 in 1816 dollars worth \$6,079 in 2005. "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005," *Measuring Worth*.

⁶⁸ Matra to Grenville Tangier, 12 September 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 130. Irving's ship, the *Anna* of Liverpool, wrecked May 26th 1789, with eleven crewmembers on

Western consuls found rising prices “so serious” that they contemplated setting fixed fees for redemptions. They anticipated that a guaranteed fee would induce Arabs to conduct wreck victims immediately to Mogador. Consuls, however, disagreed on the more reasonable price. Some expected one hundred dollars per sailor to suffice, but Simpson thought two hundred more likely to do the job. The consuls and countries they represented could not agree on a rate, so continued to pay on a case by case basis. Two hundred dollars emerged as the going rate, though this fluctuated depending on the victim’s rank, master’s preferences, and other extenuating circumstances. Seavers and his crewmate, for example, repeatedly attempted to escape, a maneuver that angered their master enough that he demanded an exceptionally high price for his trouble.⁶⁹

board. The Emperor tried to purchase the men, but was negotiating for the release of eight Frenchmen at the same time. In addition, the Englishmen’s owners refused to bargain with the Emperor and the Emperor would not allow anyone else to get them out. The Emperor eventually got ten of them out for £600, or \$2628, which comes out to about \$263 per person. He demanded European goods and armaments in return, but offered to give the English the right to purchase provisions for Gibraltar in Mogador in return. Three of the eleven were “Portuguese Blacks.” Matra tried to get the Spanish government to pay for their release in order to lessen the English “obligation and expence.” James M. Matra to Lord William Grenville, Tangier, 24 September 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 142; James Matray to William Grenville, Tangier, 21 July 1789, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 105; Matra to Grenville, Tangier, 19 December 1798, PRO Morocco, 52/8, 178; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tariffa Island, 17 August 1799, Despatches Tangier, NARA. \$1300 equates to roughly \$21,443 in 2005; \$200 to about \$3,299. \$1600 from 1790 would be worth about \$35,268 in 2005, and \$267 roughly \$5,885. “Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005,” *Measuring Worth*.

⁶⁹ Two hundred dollars was the going rate from about 1780 to about 1820. When Seavers wrecked in 1806, Africans also held a Spanish fishing crew and Danish crew. Seavers and Fenwick repeatedly and unsuccessfully ran away, and, as a result, their master demanded \$1005 for Seavers’ redemption. He eventually accepted less but insisted that Fenwick and Seavers go as a package. A Boston merchant offered \$500 towards Seavers’ ransom, seemingly against a bill he held in Boston. The master of a New Haven

In northwest Africa, as in America, “freedom rarely arrived without slaves’ taking the initiative.”⁷⁰ Enslaved Westerners, who had little desire to be permanent slaves, actively pursued redemption in any way they could. Though the enslaved ultimately had little say in when they were sold or to whom, they manipulated information and self-presentation in any way that might possibly speed their redemption. For example, they encouraged trading Arabs, who knew their worth and had the means to get them to Mogador, to purchase them.

Enslaved Westerners claimed British or French citizenship because both countries had agents and businessmen in the country and redeemed their men. Since the English had aggressively redeemed their men since at least the 1760s, African masters trusted that Englishmen would be paid for. The American Captain Paddock declared himself and his men English, which did aid his redemption. American Archibald Robbins claimed to be French, which may have induced Hamet Webber to shell out five camels and two

ship also left \$350 for his redemption. Although Seavers’ redemption far exceeded the normal rate, it did not force prices higher. In 1819, Arabs asked only \$300 plus a gratuity for Seaman Lemuel Gifford of the New Bedford brig *Mary*. Though only slightly higher than the sum normally solicited, Simpson haggled because he worried that “submitting” to this master, who held high standing in the area, would cause others to demand higher prices. In the end, Gifford’s master accepted \$190. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 26 May 1806, 6 March 1807, 2 October 1806, 7 July 1806, 30 November 1815, 18 May 1819, Despatches Tangier, NARA.

⁷⁰ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 222.

blankets for Robbins. Webber, a trading Arab, apparently believed he stood a decent chance of getting ransom money from the French.⁷¹

Enslaved Westerners pledged monetary rewards and presents, and paid expenses if their owners delivered them to Mogador. Captain James Riley begged a trading Arab, Hamet, with laden camels to buy him and his crew. He aroused Hamet's interest with "large offers of money," finally offering one hundred dollars a man and two hundred for himself. After Riley pleaded with Hamet "on my knees every time I had an opportunity" and promised to pay for their provisions, Hamet purchased five of the *Commerce's* crew.⁷² Captain Paddock of the *Oswego* promised \$400 per man and \$40 more for

⁷¹ Paddock's owner, Ahamed, confessed that had he realized Paddock was an American, he would not have expected them to be ransomed and would not have brought them to Mogador. Once safely in Mogador and redeemed, Paddock explained to Ahamed that American agents would ransom any Americans, as such was "the nature of our government." Sailors' acquaintance with other languages aided in such deception. Captain Horton of the *Charles* spoke French prior to his wreck, as did Captain Riley of the *Commerce*. Frenchman Cochelet believed that the Spanish were least likely to be redeemed if wrecked on this coast. According to him, the Spanish regularly raided from the Canary Islands to enslave coastal peoples. When a Spanish ship wrecked in 1819, the fourteen crewmen were killed and two women on board sold in Morocco. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 49, 240, 293; Robbins 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 183; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 32; Riley, MSS, 303; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 101.

⁷² Riley's mistress confirmed that Hamet and his brother came from Morocco, and could carry the Americans to Mogador. Riley agreed to pay his own ransom and four of his crews' along with incidental charges, to the sum of twelve hundred dollars. In order to pay, he applied to Horatio Sprague of Gibraltar, who "advanced this sum." Just before his wreck, he had done business with Sprague in Gibraltar where he landed a cargo of flour and tobacco and was entertained in Sprague's home. Sprague was originally from Boston. Riley later sought reimbursement from the U.S. government, and finally got \$1852 to cover his ransom fees and expenses. Also see King for a discussion of serial ownership of Western slaves. Riley, MSS NY 34, 36, 99, 101-103, 105; King, *Skeletons on the Zahara*, 148, 37, 307.

himself. This did not have the desired effect, so he threw in their travel expenses and gifts for his master's wife. Ahamed did purchase Paddock and seven of his crew, perhaps due to Paddock's bribery. On the other hand, Ahamed already owned three English boys from the *Martin Hall*. He may have had experience ransoming Western slaves and wanted to buy more before traveling to Wadinoon.⁷³

Paddock's deal guaranteed more than the American consul could or would afford. Simpson consented to pay only \$40 for Paddock, \$20 per seaman, a gratuity to the Governor of Mogador, and upkeep for the men while in Mogador. Simpson estimated this at \$1200, or \$150 per person, a sum lower than most ransoms. He did not want to bear the costs out of pocket while Paddock feared for his life and would have promised virtually anything for his freedom. Paddock's alarm grew as they traveled toward Mogador and passers-by informed Ahamed, his owner, that European consuls could not

⁷³ Frenchman Saugnier assured a "Moor" \$180 for his ransom, which seemingly persuaded the man to buy Saugnier and five of his companions. He offered different rates for the men, which reflected his awareness of how ranks affected the expected cost of Western slaves. The Moor acquired an officer for \$250, the mate for \$95, and two seamen "for only" \$85 each. Paddock purchased about three dollars worth of gifts for Ahamed's wife while in Mogador. Paddock's negotiations were conducted with the help of Laura and Jack, two boys from an earlier English wreck, the *Martin Hall*. These two boys had been enslaved for about one year, and knew some Arabic. Paddock's own facility with languages helped, as well. He found that any "intelligent man" in his situation might "learn to understand, and to speak the words of a strange language astonishingly fast." Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 106, 110, 170, 266, 292, 14, 111. \$440 from 1800 translates to about \$7,060 in 2005. \$1300 equates to roughly \$21,443 in 2005, and \$200 to about \$3,299. "Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005," *Measuring Worth*.

afford to buy slaves, that Jews in Elic paid better, and that plague, rampaging at the time, would kill his slaves before they reached Mogador.⁷⁴

“As so many cattle carrying to market:”⁷⁵ Of Profit and Paternalism

Western slaves’ machinations sometimes helped them get to Mogador, but could not guarantee them good treatment on the way. African masters treated their slaves relatively well, though this depended on the individual owner’s predilections and resources. When push came to shove, African masters expended their resources on themselves, their livestock, and families rather than on their Western slaves. American masters likely did so, also, though they were more likely to describe caring for their slaves, or “people,” as they would for members of their family, and they interfered in their slaves’ lives as part of that care.⁷⁶ According to Westerners, African masters did not

⁷⁴ Paddock learned these hair-raising tidbits from two of the English boys owned by Ahamed, Jack and Laura. According to the boys, one Arab told Ahamed that the consul in Mogador could buy no slaves due to poverty. The consul, after all, “kept no horses nor servants, nor bought goats’ skins, sheep’s wool, nor anything else.” In addition to these eight men, Simpson ransomed two other *Oswego* crewmembers later bringing the grand total for the *Oswego* to \$1783, or \$178.30 per man. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 14 July 1800, 15 August 1800, 2 March 1804, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 248, 172-173, 132-133, 14, 111. \$150 from 1800 is roughly \$2,407 in 2005 dollars. \$1300 equates to roughly \$21,443 in 2005, and \$200 to about \$3,299. “Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790-2005,” *Measuring Worth*.

⁷⁵ *Narrative of Surprise*, 26.

⁷⁶ In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, American slave masters increasingly espoused an ideology of paternalism to describe relations between master and slaves. This ideology was influenced by changing “attitudes toward cruelty, rights, and fairness,” and shifts in evangelical religion. Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003) 60-61; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake* (Williamsburg and Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American Culture and History by the

see themselves as paternalistic masters. They made little effort to regulate the lives of their Western slaves, but viewed them primarily as sources of income.⁷⁷

If African masters did not self-identify as paternalists, sometimes Western slaves ascribed paternalistic intentions to their masters. Western slaves in Algiers were less likely than wreck victims to do so, for many reasons. Western slaves in Algiers rarely interacted with their owner, the Regency, but rather worked in gangs supervised by overseers who were largely unconcerned with their well being. Most were minimally clothed and fed. Conversely, masters in northwest Africa held one to six Western slaves at a time, and often ate the same things they fed their slaves. Master and slave interacted daily and intimately, and, unlike those held in Algiers, desert-held slaves saw little of fellow slaves. Slaves in Algiers might purchase provender, but masters were often the sole source of sustenance and shelter for those in northwest Africa. In addition, slaves in northwest Africa perhaps wanted to believe a paternalistic relationship bound them to

University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 284-286, 294. For more on paternalism, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974), 5-6. See also Jan Ellen Lewis, "Slavery and the Market," *Reviews in American History* 28, no. 4 (2000): 544; Deborah A. Lee and Warren R. Hofstra, "Race, Memory, and the Death of Robert Berkeley: 'a Murder...of...Horrible and Savage Barbarity,'" *Journal of Southern History* 65, no. 1 (February 1999): 54.

⁷⁷ Walter Johnson described paternalism as a "language, or idiom of slaveholding," one that was largely a planter fantasy or state of mind. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 59-61, 111-116, 118; Walter Johnson quoted in Lacy Ford, "Reconsidering the Internal Slave Trade: Paternalism, Markets, and the Character of the Old South," in Walter Johnson (ed.), *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 149; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 5-6.

their masters because they depended so completely on them whereas those in Algiers had access to alternative sources of support and the urban marketplace.⁷⁸

African masters whether in north or northwest Africa did not share the “distinctive way...Southern slave owners looked upon and dealt with their slaves.”⁷⁹ Temporary slavery and serial ownership left a distance between African master and Western slave whereas in America, a creole population and generational slavery contributed to masters’ paternal ideology. African masters intended to make money from selling their Western slaves, and did not disguise this fact with philosophical veneers such as paternalism. Like slave traders or masters who hired out their slaves, African masters saw their slaves more as “pieces of property” who would help them turn a profit.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Wreck victims published narratives far more often than those enslaved in Algiers, and they may have cast their masters as paternal because they wrote for a reading public.

⁷⁹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 111.

⁸⁰ Some American masters viewed their slaves similarly, and not paternalistically. Jonathan Martin and others described how hiring out slaves muted the reciprocal obligations of paternalism and increased masters’ tendency to see slaves as “investments rather than dependents,” usually to the detriment of the slave. Temporary hiring lent an “inherent fluidity” to master-slave relations that prevented them from “fall[ing] into” paternalistic relationships in which the slave was dependent on their white master. For Sarah Hughes, hiring out created a different “form of slavery,” one that “weakened ties between slaves and masters.” Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 19, 66, 102-104; Sarah S. Hughes, “Slaves for Hire: The Allocation of Black Labor in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, 1782 to 1810,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (April 1978): 261, 283, 285; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 136-142; Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 48-49; Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port: The African American Community of Baltimore*,

Enslaved Westerners blamed poor treatment on their masters' desire for financial gain, a desire not reined in by Christianity, but given license by what Westerners perceived as a corrupt, and corrupting, religion—Islam. Since Christianity did not guide their behavior, their passions ruled supreme, and “avarice was” their “ruling passion.” They were so greedy that if they “could have obtained as much money” for their slaves by “putting us to death as by selling us[,]...they would not have hesitated to kill us on the spot.” Unconstrained by Christian feelings, they had “no pity or consideration for Christian captives, upon whom they looked as infidels, and as so many cattle carrying to market.”⁸¹

1790-1860 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 18, 24; T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 13-14; Keith C. Barton, “‘Good Cooks and Washers’: Slave Hiring, Domestic Labor, and the Market in Bourbon County, Kentucky,” *The Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (September 1997): 439, 444.

⁸¹ Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 187; *Narrative of the Surprise*, 26. Paternalism was not necessarily precluded by concerns about profit. Michael Tadman, for example, portrayed American masters as traders, but argued that the pursuit of profit did not impair masters' ability to view themselves as paternalists. Edward E. Baptist, “‘Cuffy,’ ‘Fancy Maids,’ and ‘One-Eyed Men’: Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States,” in Walter Johnson (ed.), *The Chattel Principle*, 163, 165, 170-171; Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 14-20, 111. See also Richard Follett, “Slavery and Plantation Capitalism in Louisiana's Sugar Country,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 1, no. 3 (2000); Emily West, “Masters and Marriages, Profits and Paternalism: Slave Owners' Perspectives on Cross-Plantation Unions in Antebellum South Carolina,” *Slavery and Abolition* 21, no. 1 (2000).

To many Westerners, Africans' lack of compassion, hatred of Christianity, and barbarism stemmed from Islam. The "cruel Turk" was barbaric because "Islam established a tyranny over the minds of men." This tyranny created political despotism, superstition, and ruthless treatment of others. As sailor Archibald Robbins explained, Christianity urged compassion, good treatment of others, and purity of character. "The imposter Mahommed," on the other hand, taught "full gratification of each propensity." Christianity instructed followers to clothe the naked and feed the hungry while Islam tutored its adherents "to tear from the unfortunate being in their power, the last piece of raiment that guards him from the inclemency of the seasons, and to see, with perfect indifference, the famished slave die at their feet, when they become unfit for market."⁸²

Despite the stereotype of cruel, greedy barbarians, enslaved Westerners sometimes assigned paternalistic intentions to some of their masters' behaviors. They simultaneously observed their masters' cravings for profit and kinder behavior towards

⁸² Though "African" and "Arab" had slightly different connotations to Westerners, both were seen negatively. To Westerners, Africans were uncivilized while Arabs and Turks were corrupted by Islam. Thomson argues that Europeans ascribed Turkish ethnicity to those ruling Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, and Morocco, not really understanding that most inhabitants in those countries were not Turkish. They associated Turks with the "Anti-Christ and the very personification of cruelty and ferocity." In the nineteenth century, Turks were increasingly seen as ignorant and Islam as a hindrance to learning. Robbins was, he wrote, subjected to the "most cruel and oppressive slavery which barbarism and a blind and ferocious superstition could produce." Ann Thomson, *Barbary and Enlightenment: European Attitudes Towards the Maghreb in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), 16-17, 29, 48-49. See also, Robert J. Allison, *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 35-59; Robbins, 5th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 81-82, "To the Public."

them.⁸³ If mutual obligations and a mandate to guide and care for one's slaves linked master and slave, then masters might curb their passionate avarice enough to tend for their slaves as people, not as commodities. If paternalism described a particular type of master-slave relationship in which the master protected, guided, and cared for his slaves and slaves worked hard, were obedient, and loyal, enslaved Americans may have wanted their African masters to be paternalistic.⁸⁴ Master-slave relationships were not, in Algiers or northwest Africa, governed by reciprocity or bounded by "mutual obligations—duties, responsibilities," or by an invasive master seeking to interfere in the slaves' lives.

African masters' everyday lives set the parameters of master-slave interactions in northwest Africa. Northwest African masters were pastoralist-traders who moved based on the needs of their herds or the goods they carried. They moved frequently with a small entourage, returning periodically to a home base where their families resided either permanently or for the season. Some of these masters owned black African slaves in addition to Western slaves, though few owned many of either. Robbins' master Mahomet Meaarah had a large family, a tutor for his children, sixty-eight camels, and five black

⁸³ Enslaved Westerners may have perceived their African masters as paternal because of their cultural background; in other words, they were familiar with paternalism between master and slave in America, and assigned that to this situation. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 284.

⁸⁴ Paternalism and increased material comfort went hand in hand in places other than the United States. After the slave trade to Jamaica was closed, "the amount of material furnished Jamaican slaves increased." Conversely, hired out slaves received few material goods, including "scanty clothing." Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 113; Hughes, "Slaves for Hire," 285.

slaves. Robbins' next master, Hamet Webber, a "trading Arab," had only one black slave. Webber may have had family elsewhere and more black slaves, but he traveled with only one slave. Wadinoon's governor, a very wealthy man, owned twenty black slaves.⁸⁵

Westerners enslaved in northwest Africa were held singly, in pairs, or in very small groups. When initially captured, Westerners were divided amongst their captors, who sometimes contended "for their right to us as slaves." One master laid claim to Robbins, one to Clark, one to Horace, and another to Dick and Riley. Paddock and another crewmember were initially claimed by one master. Saugnier and those on the *Sophia* were "unfeelingly" separated, three going to one Arab, two to another, and only one to a third.⁸⁶

If a master was wealthy enough, he might buy several Westerners to ransom in Mogador. Hamet purchased Riley and four of his men while Ahamed owned Paddock, seven of his crew, and three boys from the English ship *Martin Hall*. Saugnier and five other men from the *Sophia* were purchased by a "Moor" after Saugnier promised him that the French consul would redeem them at his purchasing price. His profit would come in gratuities and fees tacked onto the actual ransom fee. More often, Westerners were

⁸⁵ Enslaved Americans often commented on the relative wealth of their masters. According to Robbins, for example, Porter was owned in Wadinoon by a wealthy merchant, who "might be called a well dressed man any where." Robbins, 13th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 164-165, 199.

⁸⁶ Enslaved Americans implied that like slave families in America, they were ruthlessly torn apart by masters unwilling to see their shared humanity. Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 61-62; Riley, MSS, 19, 22; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 79; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 24.

brought to Mogador in dribs and drabs, one at a time.⁸⁷ Unless their masters owned other Western slaves or traveled near the owner of other Western slaves, these men had limited contact with each other. Algerian bagnio slaves socialized every night with hundreds of their fellows, but desert-held slaves uncomfortably rubbed shoulders with their masters night and day. Algerians and northwest African masters shared the desire to sell their slaves for a tidy profit, however.

One measure Western slaves used to determine if they were well treated or not was whether they were permitted to sleep in their master's tent or provided covers to stave off the cold desert nights. Robbins bunked in a corner of one generous master's tent. Paddock slept so close to his master that he pulled a shared blanket off him. Of course, "it was a long time" before Paddock "got clear of the pain" from the blow he received for this attempt. Others depicted the contention caused by their closeness to their master and his family. Hamet's wife and children "would not suffer" Riley to "approach them," let alone permit him a corner in their tent. Riley begged until Hamet relented, but Hamet's acquiescence did not prevent his wife from awakening Riley with blows until he was forced out of the tent.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 June 1800, 15 August 1800, Despatches Tangier, NARA; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 43.

⁸⁸ Robbins, 13th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 95; Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 71; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 86; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 84, 89-91. Of course, American masters saw themselves and presented themselves as paternal even when they left slaves without shelter, clothing, or food, or abused them. Robert Berkeley, for example, viewed himself as a "good master" and other whites believed him "humane and indulgent," but he "evoked violent hatred from his" slaves, several of whom bludgeoned him to death after a year of plotting to do so. Lee and

Adams was unusually entwined with one owner's family. His master, Mahomet, assigned Adams the task of tending his elder wife's goats. Mahomet's younger wife, Aisha, asked Adams to add her goats to his charges. Since she proffered payment and he watched goats regardless, he agreed. Next, Aisha asked Adams to sleep in her tent on nights Mahomet slept with his other wife. When Mahomet's young son discovered Adams in her tent, she denied any knowledge of his presence and cried bitterly until Mahomet forgave her. When the episode seemed forgotten, Aisha reiterated her invitation and Adams resumed sleeping in her tent. This time the suspicious elder wife turned up a corner of the tent, exposing the pair sleeping together. Adams was forced to feel his master's wrath.⁸⁹

Though masters in northwest Africa lived in close proximity to the few Western slaves they owned, they did not appear to subscribe to a paternalistic ideology. They, like their Western slaves, hoped for the redemption of their Western slaves. As long as Western slaves were not a problem, African masters basically left them alone. They did not seek to convert their slaves or integrate them into their family or community.

Hofstra, "Race, Memory, and the Death of Robert Berkeley." For more on Africans' tents, see Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 161-162.

⁸⁹ Mahomet, according to Adams, spent two nights with his elder wife, then one night with Aisha. Aisha fed Adams and let him sleep in her tent; she seems to have had sexual relations with him, as well. When Adams fled, he hid until he convinced a "friend" to buy him. This friend, Boerick, purchased Adams from Mahomet. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 66-68. Boerick's desire to help Adams mirrored slave stealing by poor whites, who usually did so for their own economic gain, but sometimes to aid a slave in need. Jeff Forret, *Race Relations at the Margins: Slaves and Poor Whites in the Antebellum Southern Countryside* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 143-147.

Meanwhile, they kept their slaves alive as long as they had the resources to do so and so long as that treatment did not interfere with a profit margin. Where good treatment “collided with self-interest and commercial advantage, the slave invariably lost.”⁹⁰

“Crawling...and feeding on half grown grain by the side of a camel”⁹¹

Claimed by their first master as pieces of flotsam from a wreck, Western slaves had little reason to expect good treatment. Their first master gained slaves with no expenditure and expected to profit from his new property. Here, no paternalistic gloss covered concern for income or for the slaves’ material conditions, especially when a slave’s well-being clashed with one’s family, herd, or self, and in this harsh environment, Western slaves and their masters frequently lacked food and water. Though some Western slaves blamed their harsh masters for their deprivation, survival clearly dictated much of their masters’ behavior.⁹²

⁹⁰ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 295, 294.

⁹¹ Paddock evocatively described eating “barley in the milk” in the following passage: “Reader, pause a minute, and figure to yourself the appearance of ten of your poor unfortunate fellow-mortals, crawling over the face of the earth, feeding on half grown grain, by the side of a camel, and intermixed with eight wild Arabs, who, in all appearance, were dragging them into perpetual bondage, never to hear of, nor see any more, their dear friends and most beloved relations!” Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 95-96.

⁹² Western slaves had few options for obtaining food while slaves in America had multiple strategies available for procuring material goods and food. Slaves in Fairfax County, Virginia, fished, trapped animals, and worked garden plots, for example. More than 60% of American slaves were allowed to cultivate gardens in the antebellum period. Damian Alan Pargas, “Work and Slave Family Life in Antebellum North Virginia,” *Journal of Family History* 31, no. 4 (October 2006): 349-350; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 114-116; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 69, 203; McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 18, 22, 25, 50-51; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 113.

Shipwrecked Americans required food, water, and possibly medical attention right away. Riley needed water so badly that he was “willing to sell” his “life for one gill of fresh water.” Fortunately for Riley and others, African masters generally offered water when claiming their slaves. Seemingly some distance from a home base and supplies, they did not offer solid foods, but only camel’s milk.⁹³

If they could, Westerners supplemented camel’s milk with food salvaged from their wreck. Hector Black hid a piece of cheese from his master, and slowly munched on it when desperately hungry. Pork and wine were welcome finds since Muslims were, strictly speaking, not to partake of either, and so usually consigned these items to their slaves. Captain Scheult of the *Sophia* disguised a “quantity of fresh water” by pouring it into large, empty wine bottles that retained a bit of wine “for color.” To Robbins’ annoyance, his master kept his pork, which he meted out a little at a time. This made it last a long time; even so, retrieved supplies lasted only a finite period after which the slave relied on his master for sustenance.⁹⁴

⁹³ Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 61; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 62. They were introduced to their new dietary mainstay: camel’s milk. Saugnier was given milk right away. Saugnier, *Voyages*, 28. Nomadic groups rarely ate meat, but relied on camels’ milk. Camels give 5-7 liters of milk a day. Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 162-163, 166.

⁹⁴ Live pigs were staples on ships; crews slaughtered the pigs for food as they needed. Sole dibs on pork was the “only benefit...derived from the faith of a mussalman [sic].” Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 91; Robbins 5th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 90; Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 81; *Narrative of Surprise*, 23; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 23.

Enslaved Westerners vacillated between castigating their monstrous masters for not feeding them and pitying them for having no food or water. Either judgement ignored the brutal realities of northwest African life. Robbins claimed, for instance, that he could not “by the most humble and urgent entreaties, move the obdurate heart of my master to afford me a drop,” but his master probably had little or no water and may have been rationing what he did have. Paddock bitterly complained that the “inhuman monsters” refused him water even after a fellow slave advised him that it had not rained in two months.⁹⁵

If their African masters were not cold-hearted Muslims or suffering wretches unable to provide for themselves, maybe they simply did not feel hunger and thirst. As Paddock explained, the “Arabs, from habit, could go a long time without water, and did not appear to suffer at all in comparison with the sufferings we endured.” Similarly, a British slave observed that the Arabs thought “nothing of” hunger, “being accustomed to this kind of life.” This reasoning contained a partial truth. African owners knew when they might reach the next watering hole or village, and knowing they would eventually find food or water may have helped them deal with devouring hunger and thirst. However, their masters gave every indication of suffering the same hunger and thirst as their slaves’. After digging to expose water, the *Sophia*’s crew and their masters drank

⁹⁵ Robbins, 5th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 94; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 117-119.

eagerly and deeply. Riley and Dick's master forced them to kneel "like camels" to drink, but master and slave alike imbibed the black, disgusting water.⁹⁶

Most African masters fed their Western slaves what they themselves ate, though maybe in smaller quantities. When on the move, short rations sustained the Arabs. Water was perpetually in short supply, and they rarely consumed their livestock, though they might eat a sick or injured animal. Western slaves, complaining bitterly of hunger and thirst, often blamed their masters rather than acknowledging that their masters could not share what they did not have. When their masters did have food, however, they ate a larger share in front of their starving slaves, sometimes giving their slaves only enough to keep them moving. If the "Arabs fared very scantily," their slaves did "still worse."⁹⁷

Master and slave suffered badly when traveling particularly if their animals stopped giving milk, which furnished at least some fluids. Without water or milk, African masters searched for alternative fluids, and, if found, they shared with their slaves. When Paddock begged for water in the desert, his owners responded "with an angry grin, *shrub mackan*," which Paddock understood to mean there was no water. Still,

⁹⁶ Riley observed one hundred people and four to five hundred camels around this well, which was, apparently used by everyone in the vicinity. Though Riley previously cautioned his men against drinking too much water, he "now experienced how much easier it was to preach than to practice." This water gave them violent diarrhea, which, Riley wrote, was "not very troublesome to us; and as our situation was similar to that of a beast, being totally unclothed, all we cared about was to slake our unabating thirst." The Arabs laughed at Paddock when he complained of thirst. Paddock thought Arabs needed less water because they ate no salt and were lean-fleshed. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 90, 101, 119; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 33, 36; *Narrative of the Surprise*, 26; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 19.

⁹⁷ Riley, MSS, 39; Robbins 5th ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 70; Traill and Lawson, "Account of Scott," 47.

his seemingly fierce master provided potatoes and onions salvaged from their ship, then animal guts, all of which provided moisture and sustenance. When the party finally reached water, the Arabs, as thirsty as their slaves, drank deeply of the putrid water before passing their drinking bowl to their Western slaves. This was the only water any of them had had for days.⁹⁸

More commonly, masters and slaves mixed camels' urine with a little water to stretch their supply. Once the water was completely gone, master and slave imbibed "a little camels [*sic*] water," which Riley noted, "we preferred to our own." Eventually, men and animals stopped urinating "for the want of moisture." At this point, their situation was grim indeed. Riley's master's first priority was his livestock, who were watered first if there was any water whatsoever. Second, the master and his peers drank, and last, if any water was left, their slaves.⁹⁹

Riley and his men were so emaciated that they could barely stand. Their only nourishment, solid or fluid, was in the snails they found. Starving, Riley's crew took desperate action. They drew a four-year-old Arab boy away from the camp, laid him

⁹⁸ The potatoes and onions were part of the plunder taken from the *Oswego*. Paddock's master consumed small animals of some sort, and though he did not share the meat with his Western slaves, he did pass the guts and bones to them. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 80, 84-92.

⁹⁹ The men caught camel's urine in their hands "as they voided it; its taste was bitter, but not salt[y] and it relieved our fainting spirits." The animals stopped giving milk on the journey, at which point Riley's master purchased emergency rations in the form of a sheep. They roasted and ate the sheep only when it was unable to keep up with them. Riley, MSS, 28, 35. Saugnier commented that their Moorish masters, "being contented to live on milk," gave him "roots both for moisture and sustenance." Saugnier, *Voyages*, 33.

down, and raised a rock to bash his head. They intended to eat the boy, but were stopped at the last second by Riley, who convinced them this was unseemly behavior for American, Christian men. Realizing the poor condition their slaves were in, their master did not assign them any work at all. Presumably, this was the best their master could do. He could not sustain them, but, to keep them alive until he collected ransom, he could minimize their physical exertion while under-fed and watered.¹⁰⁰

Some masters fed enslaved Westerners only when they sensed their merchandise might die without sustenance. Paddock's master "dealt out about a pint of milk" when "afraid of losing his property by our death, and anxious that we should live." Usually given about a pint of milk mixed with water a day, Paddock had gone three days without any nourishment at all. Paddock took his feeding as a sign he was to be sold; in fact, he was fed so he would look lively and fetch a decent price.¹⁰¹ Paddock pragmatically interpreted his master's actions, but sometimes American slaves assigned paternalistic care to their masters. When Robbins felt unwell, he believed his master knew his "indisposition arose from want of food." Concerned for Robbins, his master cooked him "a small piece of camel's hide" and gave him some milk, which restored him by morning. Robbins gives a somewhat sentimental presentation of his master coming to the aid of his

¹⁰⁰ Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1851, 58; Riley, MSS, 28-29.

¹⁰¹ Paddock was soon sold to Hamet, the trading Arab who redeemed him. Robbins 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 69, 81, 90; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 101.

desperate slave, yet the truth is that the master had no supplies and boiled camel's hide in desperation to keep his slave alive and collect some profit.¹⁰²

Western slaves had few options if their master could not feed them. The environment yielded little even to those long-familiar with it; if their masters were unable to find food, the slaves were unlikely to do so. Unlike those enslaved in Algiers, they had few opportunities to purchase provisions in the rural, desert surroundings even had they the means to do so. Enslaved Westerners had limited access to markets, and few had access to money or goods to trade. Their masters' purchases and efforts were far more likely to sustain Westerners than any actions they themselves undertook.¹⁰³

In towns and villages, masters and slaves found markets with varied goods. In cities like Timbuktu, which Riley described as "a very large city, five times as great as Swerah [Mogador]," anything was for sale. Timbuktu and smaller towns offered a variety of foodstuffs. In Santa Cruz (Agadir), Paddock was given "coscoosoo, which is a favourite dish with the Moors." In the town of Woled D'leim, Adams feasted on camel's and goat's milk and an occasional bunch of dates. According to Adams, almost anything

¹⁰² Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 127.

¹⁰³ The Africans purchased or exchanged goods in small towns, oases, and from passing groups. Riley's master exchanged goods for barley corn and purchased a kid from a passing group. After the kid was boiled, he devoured the meat with his tribesmen. The slaves later feasted on the entrails. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 45, 49-50; *Narrative of the Surprise*, 25.

could be bought in Wadinoon's Sunday markets, including oils, honey, meats, bread and "sometimes cooked locusts."¹⁰⁴

Enslaved Westerners found creative ways to procure food in towns and villages. Some solicited food when not watched by a master. While running errands for their master, for example, two English boys begged neighbors for milk and food, a strategy many found successful. Pat, Paddock's Irish cook, sang and danced in one town in exchange for food. Captain Paddock joined in, and also received food as a reward for his capering. Only William Black of the *Surprise* mentioned getting a cash tip from his master. He bought half a bushel of dates and twelve cakes of barley bread in the local market with the two drachms (or about three pence) given him by his master.¹⁰⁵

The British crew of the *Surprise* found handouts necessary when near Wadinoon. While there, their master limited their rations to corn twice a day, but the Englishmen were able to supplement their diets nicely in the nearby villages. "Children and negro slaves" gave them carrots and a few dates. Jews in a small village called Elinegh,

¹⁰⁴ Both Riley and Adams claimed to have been in Timbuktu, which was over sixty days' travel from Mogador. Riley and Adams described Wadinoon as surrounded by barley and tobacco fields and date trees, all of which were available in the town's market. Riley, MSS, 62-3; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 225; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 63; Schroeter, *Merchants*, 93. Their claims of reaching Timbuktu were, and are, considered spurious. See, for example, Jared Sparks, *The American Review*, July 1817, 221-223; Sparks, *The American Review*, September 1817, 289-290. Richard L. Smith, "The Image of Timbuktu in Europe Before Caillié," in E.P. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society 1982* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985), 16-18.

¹⁰⁵ Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 161, 243; *Narrative of the Surprise*, 30.

roughly a mile from Wadinoon, gave them food to eat and sometimes “a cup of mahia (spirits distilled from figs).”¹⁰⁶

If settled for long enough, enslaved Westerners might exchange their possessions or earn money in villages and towns. “When very hungry,” the crew of the *Surprise* sold their “buttons for dates.” They also worked to supplement their diets. The sailors “employed themselves in making wooden spoons and ladles,” which they sold to the Jews in Elinegh in return for mahia, food, and tobacco. “Black Jack,” the ship’s cook, bought a goat, various fowl, and eggs with money he “got from the Moors, in payment for medicine and advice.” He pretended to be a doctor, and, to the disbelief of his crewmates, “the credulous fools believed him.”¹⁰⁷

Outside of towns and villages, enslaved Westerners rarely got handouts and could not purchase victuals. Here, they foraged or stole to supplement their diets. Foraging was a particularly important strategy in the desert. Though it yielded little, their need was so great that even a small addition made a big difference. They gathered mussels when near the coast, and ate them raw or roasted. Cochelet claimed he and his fellow Western slaves ate nothing but what shellfish they found while their master prayed in the morning. They also collected snails and roots, which were about the only other edibles

¹⁰⁶ *Narrative of the Surprise*, 34.

¹⁰⁷ *Narrative of the Surprise*, 30, 32, 37-39. In Timbuktu, Riley exchanged a snuff box he carried after two months of slavery for all the jewelry worn by a woman. Riley claimed the woman’s gold ornaments—rings, nose and ear rings, chains and bracelets—weighed a pound. He took these ornaments, made of “solid gold at Tombuctoo,” all the way home, giving them to his wife, who “now wears part of them.” Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 63. Slaves in Louisiana dug ditches, cut wood, and collected Spanish moss to make money. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 60-61.

found in the desert. While watching goats and camels, Saugnier searched for truffles and wild roots while Riley and his men ate roots they found in the sand.¹⁰⁸

This type of foraging had a possible dangerous outcome. Western slaves, not familiar with their environment, might eat anything when starving even if they did not know what they ate. Savage consumed a sweet, honey-tasting weed that Riley refused to touch until their master identified the plant. The starving Savage would not desist and continued to gorge on the weed until he started vomiting violently. Savage survived, but his food experiment highlights how unfamiliar enslaved Westerners were with the flora and fauna of this environment. Given only one drink of water a day, Paddock took a risk when he chewed bits of a dwarf thorn bush for moisture. On the other hand, it is likely he had seen his masters doing so or that they had instructed him to try this. Foraging might be painful or even fatal without some guidance from their masters.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ “For eighteen days” the foraged shellfish were “almost our only food,” wrote Cochelet. Riley claimed the root they found cured their persistent diarrhea. Paddock wrote that the Arabs prayed nearly a half an hour, which gave Westerners some time to forage. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 198, 70; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 22, 52; Riley, MSS, 40. New World slaves also foraged and hunted to supplement their diet. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 47; Thomas, “Power and Community,” 543-545; John T. Schlotterbeck, “The Internal Economy of Slavery in Rural Piedmont Virginia,” in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, (eds.), *The Slaves’ Economy: Independent Production By Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1991), 173. See also Amy L. Young, Michael Tuma, and Cliff Jenkins, “The Role of Hunting to Cope with Risk at Saragossa Plantation, Natchez, Mississippi,” *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 3 (2001); John Solomon Otto and Augustus Marion Burns III, “Black Folks and Poor Buckras: Archeological Evidence of Slave and Overseer Living Conditions on an Antebellum Plantation,” *Journal of Black Studies* 14, no. 2 (December 1983).

¹⁰⁹ Riley’s master thought the weed might be Indian tobacco. Savage continued to vomit for over two hours, until he was throwing up blood. Riley probably chewed the leaves of

Foraging kept slaves alive when their masters were unable to provide basic foodstuffs, and sometimes sustained master and slave. Because they had no water or milk, Robbins shared snails he found with his master's wife and children. Starving, Ahamed and his Arab cronies gathered and ate barley in a field they passed, but they paused long enough to assist their slaves in partaking of a much-needed meal. With this act, the Arabs, Paddock wrote, "for the first time, showed toward us some marks of kindness" in helping them to fill their stomachs.¹¹⁰

Enslaved Americans stole when they could. Dick slept in his master's tent, and, "as he was a domestic slave[,] he managed to steal water and sometimes some milk when he was dry." When Paddock and his men parched and ground barley, they appointed one man to "pilfer a little of it." Since Adams watched goats and sheep far from the town of Woled D'leim, he periodically managed to kill an animal and cook it in a cave.¹¹¹ Slaves stole non-essentials from their masters, also. Paddock pilfered his master's tobacco when

an argan tree, which he had seen his masters do for moisture. Riley, MSS, 49-50; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 91, 93.

¹¹⁰ The Arabs, reported Paddock, were faster at grabbing barley. Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 102, 104, 95-96; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 24, 37-38; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 95.

¹¹¹ The opportunity to steal was not always related to assigned work: the *Sophia*'s crew occupied a tent in which goats were normally kept. When the goats ran in, they attempted to milk the goats, but had little success. Riley, MSS, 24; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 158; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 63; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 44. Slaves in America stole from their masters, as well; in fact, they argued they had a right to their masters' goods because they produced those goods or wealth allowing purchase of them. Pargas, "Work and Slave Family Life in Northern Virginia," 352-353; Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 79-83; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 599-605; Forret, *Race Relations at the Margins*, 75-76; McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves*, 40-43.

put in charge of his tobacco pouch. Caught once and threatened with dire punishments, he simply got sneakier. When his master fell asleep, he carried the pouch into the wheat field, took as much as he “durst,” and returned the pouch.¹¹²

Even without the ideology of paternalism, African slave masters supplied their slaves with what they could without hurting their own survival or that of their family or livestock. Unfortunately for Western slaves, northwest Africa offered few options for supplementing food and material goods beyond what their masters furnished. Unlike New World slaves, those in northwest Africa could not tend provision grounds or gardens, raise livestock or poultry, or make things to trade for foods or other goods.

Conclusion

Despite frequent complaints of cruelty, enslaved Westerners sometimes gave their masters credit for doing the best they could with the resources at hand. Riley, for example, was sure his owner regretted having no food to give him while Saugnier “had no complaints to make of my conductors; they treated me with humanity, and as far as lay in their power, procured me whatever seemed to please me the most.” Robbins “suffered all but death” when owned by Ganus, “but from his situation I know not how

¹¹² Paddock had to replace a careful arrangement of sticks on top of the pouch, as well. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 168-170. American slaves also stole non-essential items for their own enjoyment. Sophie White, “‘Wearing Three or Four Handkerchiefs around his Collar, and Elsewhere about Him’: Slaves’ Constructions of Masculinity and Ethnicity in French Colonial New Orleans,” *Gender and History* [Great Britain] 15, no. 3 (2003); Alex Lichtenstein, “‘That Disposition to Theft, with which They Have Been Branded’: Moral Economy, Slave Management, and the Law,” *Journal of Social History* 22, no. 3 (1988); Marvin L. Kay, Marvin L. Michael, and Lorin Lee Cary, “‘They are Indeed the Constant Plague of their Tyrants’: Slave Defence of a Moral Economy in Colonial North Carolina, 1748-1772,” *Slavery and Abolition* 6, no. 3 (1985).

he could have helped it. He was a grave, thoughtful man...and often bestowed favors upon me, which notwithstanding my distress when with him, I remember with gratitude.” From the safety of freedom, formerly enslaved Westerners voiced gratitude to those who kept them alive on the dangerous trek to Mogador. Having survived the journey, they reflected that their masters—diabolical, profit-driven Turks though they were—had done the best they could for them.¹¹³

In their grateful reflections, the former slaves simultaneously recognized their masters’ pragmatism in keeping them alive in a harsh environment and insisted on reading paternalism into their master-slave relations. Though Riley, Saugnier, and Robbins knew their masters sustained them to make a profit, each injected a tone of paternalistic concern into their masters’ intentions. Riley saw pity and sorrow; Saugnier detected a desire to please a slave; and Robbins believed his master “bestowed favors” upon him. Yet African masters took a calculated risk when transporting Western slaves to Mogador or Wadinoon. Masters had to feed extra mouths, avoid watering holes, and take more difficult paths to avoid bandits when traveling with Western slaves. Their risk was calculated to bring profit.¹¹⁴

The short-term nature of their enslavement, the overwhelmingly male composition of the slaves, the profit-minded goal of their masters, and the masters’

¹¹³ Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1817, 19; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 33; Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 120. Similarly, slaves in America recalled good times while enslaved and sometimes remembered masters fondly. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 167-168; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 269.

¹¹⁴ Robbins, 3rd ed., *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 120.

general contempt for Christians all acted to undercut the development of paternalistic feelings of the African masters toward their Western slaves. Their concern for enslaved Westerners was likely somewhere in between self-serving care for a valuable commodity and care for an item that was both property and person. When forced to make the choice, masters chose self-preservation over caring for an outsider whom they would own for a short period of time.

Chapter 5

“SONS OF SORROW”¹: THE SLAVE EXPERIENCE IN NORTHWEST AFRICA

Captain James Riley parted from his master with “feelings of regret, and shedding tears,” for his master “had been a kind master, and to him I owed, under God my life and deliverance from slavery.” Like Riley, other Westerners felt indebted to their former African masters for being kept alive and treated well. Yet Riley and other Westerners had been slaves whose master sustained them for the sake of profit; they freed their Western slaves only when paid. In other words, Western slaves in northwest Africa described solicitous concern from their masters, but, from their masters’ point of view, benevolence was not involved in their keeping or ransoming of Western slaves. Riley’s tears indicate a not uncommon disjuncture between his interpretation of events and his master’s.²

¹ A village sheik declared to Hamet and Bel Cossim that “we are of the same religion...and owe these Christian dogs nothing; but we have an undoubted right to make merchandise of them, and oblige them to carry our burdens like camels.” Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut...*^{3rd} ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1818), 107.

² Riley’s master was Hamet, who, Riley wrote, “was of a much lighter colour than the other Arabs” they were with, “and I thought he was less cruel.” James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the Brig Commerce* (New York: T. & W. Mercein, 1817), 352. Historians described a similar disjuncture in American slavery. If slaves in America accepted paternalism, they acknowledged a “radically different interpretation”

Here, I consider the world Western slaves knew in northwest Africa. This includes what they experienced as slaves and how they explained those experiences. Their enslavement differed from that of those enslaved in Algiers in terms of labor required, resistance possibilities, and ability or willingness to form bonds and act in collaboration with fellow slaves. I am especially interested in how the conditions of their enslavement affected their interactions with their masters and fellow slaves.

Because both were focused on the goal of redeeming Western slaves, master and slave wished to minimize conflict until that event occurred. Unlike their Algerian-held counterparts, these slaves interacted directly and daily with their masters, making it difficult, if not impossible, to purge their interactions of all conflict. Master-slave relations were marked by accommodation and compromise as both sought to “keep their activities within the bounds of a relationship that” allowed “for a surprising amount of autonomy, while keeping overt confrontation, from which neither stood to gain, to a minimum.”³ In part, the environment and the economy of northwest Africa dictated master and slave’s interdependence, which served to limit conflict. Masters needed a slave to collect ransom, and slaves needed a master to survive.

Since most Western slaves were redeemed, they had little to gain by overt resistance, and much to lose. An intractable slave might be sold into the interior or find

than did their masters. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1976), 5.

³ Though Christopher Morris was describing master-slave relations in America, I believe his articulation theory applies to negotiations between masters and slaves in northwest Africa, as well. Christopher Morris, “The Articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered,” *The Journal of American History* 85 (Dec., 1998): 1003.

his redemption price set prohibitively high. Instead of overtly resisting, then, Western slaves agitated against particular conditions of their enslavement. Their resistance sometimes shaped the conditions of their enslavement, but they did not seek to dismantle the northwest African system of Western enslavement. Examining the actions and perceptions of Western slaves in northwest Africa allows us to see how “enslaved people theorized their own actions and the practical process through which those actions provided” a basis for “new ways of thinking about slavery and resistance.”⁴

“The Irsome Duties of a Slave”⁵

In America, “work necessarily engaged most slaves, most of the time,” and “when, where, and especially how” slaves worked “determined, in large measure, the course of their lives.”⁶ Conversely, Americans enslaved in northwest Africa did little work; labor did not define their slave experiences. Some western slaves in northwest

⁴ Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 118. In this vein, Karen Robbins offered an example of American slaves negotiating for their freedom, and juxtaposed these consultations with a white wife’s attempts to influence her husband’s decisions. Karen Robbins, “Power Among the Powerless: Domestic Resistance by Free and Slave Women in the McHenry Family of the New Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 62-67.

⁵ Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut...*, 5th ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1818), 83.

⁶ Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, “Introduction,” in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, (eds.), *The Slaves’ Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London: Frank Cass, 1991), 1; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 5. Since their time at sea was “all about work,” sailors were used to working hard. Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 69; Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 62.

Africa did not labor manually, not because they filled elite positions, but because they marshaled their strength for travel.⁷ When they did work, they performed tasks undertaken by virtually every Western slave at some point of their enslavement. Labor assignments did not have the same divisive effects as in Algiers.

Several factors determined whether and how enslaved Americans worked in northwest Africa. Their jobs depended on whether they were stationary or moving, whether they had a high potential for ransom, and whether their master owned other slaves. They rarely toiled on public works or nursed cash crops. Instead, they did work that their master or his dependents would have done if he did not own a slave. The work Western slaves did was helpful, but not central to their masters' livelihood.

Sometimes newly captured Westerners did no work at all. Like most Westerners, Robert Adams was "greatly fatigued" when captured because he had just survived a shipwreck and fought his way to shore. Most wreck victims probably had no provisions and may have been injured in the wreck. One of the *Sophia's* crew, for example, was not put to work because he had a "severe contusion on his leg."⁸ Northwest African masters seemingly allowed their tired, dislocated slaves time to recover and come to terms with their situation before putting them to work. The nicety of initial adjustment time was not

⁷ See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

⁸ Robert Adams, *The Narratives of Robert Adams, an American Sailor: who was wrecked on the western coast of Africa, in the year 1810* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1817), 35; Charles Cochelet, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Sophia, on the 30th of May 1819, on the Western Coast of Africa and of the captivity of part of the crew in the desert of the Sahara* (London: Printed for Sir Richard Phillips and Co., 1822), 15.

extended by the Algerian Regency; in Algiers, most Western slaves worked from the time they disembarked in the city.

In northwest Africa, some Westerners did not work initially because there was little to be done. Their new masters moved up and down the coasts, monitoring the area for wrecks, and they required only mobility from their slaves. Though Judah Paddock and his crew did not work at first, they were driven by shouts of “bomar” accompanied by a “blow, and a push forward.” Far from their base camp or home village, African masters had no pressing need for crops or animals to be tended. Once in their masters’ village, Paddock and his crew refused to harvest grain, but did make clothes for one of their fellow slaves.⁹

If their wrecked ship was close by and still afloat, they might be forced to unload the ship and hide the resulting plunder. Many crews left their ships and walked down the coast, and were thus captured far from their original landing site. Paddock and some of his men walked miles from their ship, the *Oswego*. Captain James Riley and the *Commerce*’s crew spent about six days on their long boat, and came ashore hundreds of miles from their wrecked vessel. This distance relieved them from the burdensome work of unloading their own ship for their masters’ profit.¹⁰

⁹ Their master ordered them to make clothing for Jack, their master’s favorite, using two yards of red flannel that had washed ashore from their wrecked ship. Jack was one of the *Martin Hall* boys. Judah Paddock, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Ship Oswego, on the Coast of South Barbary, and of the Sufferings of the Master and Crew While in Bondage Among the Arabs* (New York: Captain James Riley, 1818), 75, 133.

¹⁰ Paddock, *Narrative of the Oswego*, 133-134; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 13.

If enslaved near their ship, Westerners discharged any cargo for their masters. This hot, hard work might require braving the surf to swim to and from the ship. Although he claimed he could not swim, Charles Cochelet fought his way to the wrecked *Sophia* because his master had threatened to kill him if he refused. Cochelet and his crewmates were kept at this work for two days, which included three stifling hours in the hold passing goods up to Africans on the deck. Once the ship was unloaded, Cochelet dug holes deep enough to hold twenty to thirty barrels of flour. Then the men “were obliged to roll” the barrels “with incredible exertion,” into these storage holes.¹¹

Most of the newly enslaved were given less physical work. One victim of the *Sophia*’s 1819 wreck dug a hole deep enough for “salt and brackish” water to seep through, thus providing master and slave with water. While Cochelet and a shipmate dug storage holes, other Frenchmen prepared the Arabs’ food, a painful task as the food was not shared with the starving French slaves. One crewman made bread, kneading the dough on a wooden bowl outside his master’s tent. Saugnier, victim of a 1783 French wreck, made butter by shaking goat’s milk in leather bags. Englishman Alexander Scott, wrecked in 1810, ground barley between two flat stones.¹² Someone had to perform

¹¹ Already weakened by the wreck and lack of sustenance, Cochelet did not know how they “were enabled to resist so painful a labour.” Digging such holes may have been a common way of storing items in this area. Archibald Robbins described similar holes being dug for grain storage in Wadinoon. Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 14-17, 22; Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising an Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce*, 13th ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1821), 229.

¹² Cochelet, *Narrative of Oswego*, 13, 52; Saugnier, *Voyages to the Coast of Africa by Messrs. Saugnier and Brisson*, translated from the French (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1792), 34, 36; Thomas Stewart Traill and William Lawson, “Account of the

these food-related tasks; they were necessary, relatively easy, generally familiar jobs that anyone could do. After all, people ground grain and built fires all over the eighteenth and nineteenth-century world. Western slaves were often given necessary, relatively uncomplicated, tedious, and routine jobs.

If their master was settled rather than moving, Western slaves might do more manual work. However, African masters frequently traveled because they were either traders or pastoralists who moved with their goods or flocks, and because they escorted their Western slaves to Mogador so they could collect ransom for them. African masters were so often on the move that travel, rather than labor, was the defining characteristic of Western slavery in northwest Africa. While traveling, work was less demanding and a slave's time was punctuated with labor-free periods.

Not African masters might not give their Western slaves any work while slogging towards Mogador, but this was not necessarily a boon to their slaves. Trekking around the Sahara was demanding under the best of conditions, but Western slaves were underfed and ill because their masters had no food to prepare.¹³ Westerners usually walked beside their master's livestock, though some were permitted the uncomfortable privilege of riding a camel, or, somewhat more comfortable but more rare, an ass. After a

Captivity of Alexander Scott Among the Wandering Arabs...nearly Six Years," *The Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* 4, no. 7 (January, 1821): 47.

¹³ See, for instance, Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 70; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 32-33; Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 162-166. Enslaved Americans found riding a camel very uncomfortable, particularly because it chafed their skin until they bled. Dean King, *Skeletons on the Zahara: A True Story of Survival* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004), 10.

few weeks of walking with no sustenance, Captain James Riley and the four Americans held with him were so emaciated that they could barely stand. Recognizing their state, their master carried water for his camels himself. His slaves had only to drive the camels and goats and keep up with their master.¹⁴

When not so badly off as Riley and his men, Western slaves performed repetitive maintenance tasks, such as caring for animals, setting up and taking down tents, unloading the camels, building fires, and preparing whatever food their owners had. Western slaves did these chores whether or not they were on the move. Gathering fuel, for instance, was a constant task. In fact, Archibald Robbins' first duty was collecting brush for his master's fire. His master's daughter demonstrated what brush to cut and how much to amass, and then it was Robbins' regular duty. A child showed Saugnier how to collect dead wood, a task that took Saugnier a "full two hours" to complete. Even Captain Riley gathered a "few dry sticks toward evening" for his master.¹⁵

Traveling or not, Western slaves also tended the livestock that accompanied their masters. Like wood collecting, watching sheep and goats graze was a job so simple that

¹⁴ Clark and Burns drove the camels, and Riley, Savage and Horace the goats. James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce* (Hartford: S. Andrus and Son, 1851), 58, 40; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 46, 88, 112; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 82-83. Riley's and Robbins' narratives both went through multiple editions, many of which I read. The editions vary little from each other, but I noticed different details as I read different editions. My footnotes indicate in which edition I noted a particular fact. Saugnier's masters looked for wood, leaving him to care for the camels, which I assume meant unload the animals. Saugnier, *Voyages*, 33.

¹⁵ After collecting fuel, Robbins borrowed coals from the closest tent to start his fire; this way he did not have to use steel and flint to start it. Barrett and Williams were in the neighboring tent. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 68-69, 81; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 33, 35; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 94.

it was “generally entrusted to children,” or to slaves. Enslaved cabin boys watched animals in the company of enslaved African children or alone. George, an English boy from the *Martin Hall*, watched his master’s flock while the English teenager Alexander Scott cared for goats and sheep assisted by his master’s daughter. Slaves were probably entrusted with this work because they could do little damage to the flocks they tended. They had only to keep the flock together and protect it from the rare predator.¹⁶

Western slaves watched grazing animals while settled, but were less likely to drive animals while on the move. Two of Riley’s men drove their master’s goats while traveling, but the job had been idiot-proofed for them. The goats were tied together to prevent them from straying. African masters may have viewed all Western slaves as incompetent, and therefore assigned only simple tasks to them. On the other hand, these particular Westerners were ill and starving at the time. Indeed, the two weakest slaves, and seemingly the two least respected by their masters, were charged with the animals: the sickly Aaron Savage, whom the Arabs called “fonta” or bad, and young Horace, ship’s boy.¹⁷

¹⁶ Even today, a poor family in the Western Sahara might own four to six camels while a wealthier family might own hundreds. John Mercer, *Spanish Sahara* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1976), 166; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 37; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 134; Traill and Lawson, “Account of Alexander Scott,” 47.

¹⁷ Riley, “Riley’s Narrative: Manuscript,” [1817] New-York Historical Society Special Collections, 25-26; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 46; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 36. Most slaves in America performed manual, unskilled labor, the vast majority as field laborers. Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 105; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 267, 306-7, 311; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake* (Williamsburg and Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American Culture and History by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 205.

African masters entrusted Western slaves with their camels less frequently than with their goats. Western slaves unloaded camels and sometimes drove them, though normally only if in close proximity to their masters. Their masters appeared unwilling to let the camels out of their sight. Camels were their most valuable possessions: the animals were crucial for desert travel and transportation of goods, and for survival on desert journeys. When traveling, Africans survived on camel's milk and camel's urine when nothing else was available.¹⁸

Since Westerners knew little about the beasts and perhaps cared little, putting the animals in Western slaves' hands was potentially dangerous. On the other hand, most of their masters owned camels, and they did require care. Robbins' first master owned about twenty camels. This made him "not rich," but not poor either according to Robbins. This man possessed two tents for his family including at least two wives, both further indications of his economic status. One of Riley's masters owned sixty to seventy camels and at least two black slaves; he was considered a rich man.¹⁹

Most enslaved Americans drove camels at some point, mostly without mishap because their masters monitored them at this task. Two Arabs supervised Hogan, Horace, and Dick of the *Commerce* while they tended their master's camels. The Arabs, perhaps

¹⁸ Riley's owner Hamet assigned an African slave and two small boys to drive his camels to find fodder each day they were stationary. Camels were worth about ten to twelve goats or five to eight sheep. Mercer, *Spanish Sahara*, 166-167; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1851, 57.

¹⁹ Robbins' wealthy master owned crewmate William Porter, also. Because their master was wealthy, Robbins and Porter lived "as well as could be wished." Riley, MSS, 29; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 197.

displeased with their American slaves' performance, beat them soundly while they attempted to perform this task. Slave inexperience and disinterest paired with the great value of camels caused masters to be vigilant and aggressive about their care, and made bungling the job a serious matter, as Aaron Savage learned.²⁰ When Savage, Riley, and James Clark fetched Hamet's camels, Savage spooked one of the animals. This camel took off, followed by the others. As soon as informed, their masters pursued the camels on horseback, but even on horses, rounding up the beasts took two to three hours. Savage, whom the Arabs blamed for the fiasco, received a severe beating.²¹

When stationary, Western slaves preferred watching goats or sheep to other jobs. This "light" work involved taking a flock to pasture and sitting with them for the day. Even when tending almost two hundred animals, Robert Adams considered this undemanding work. Africans must have concurred: slaves, Western and African, and children were charged with it. They were not supervised while at this task, though two slaves or a slave and an Arab child might be sent to do it together. Adams, for example, watched one master's flock with an eighteen-year-old Portuguese slave.²²

Western slaves enjoyed this job because they were free of their master's gaze, and they relished this freedom. Saugnier was entirely "abandoned to [his] own reflections" while watching a flock, for instance. In addition to private reflections, Saugnier and

²⁰ Riley, MSS, 29, 24-25, 27.

²¹ Riley, MSS, 24-26, 29, 40, 49; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 168.

²² John Stevens was the Portuguese slave. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 35, 63, 65-66.

others used this time to supplement their rations. Saugnier, whose master gave him only the “smallest amount” of milk, searched for “truffles and other wild roots” while with flocks. Far from town and unwatched, Adams fed himself while tending goats and sheep outside of Woled D’leim. He sometimes killed a kid and then dug a hole in which to cook it. Adams does not mention being punished for these missing goats, but when a fox snatched several, he was beaten. His master may have noticed, but not punished, the loss of one animal, but acted when several animals were lost.²³

When stationary, African masters and their Western slaves stayed in a village, town, or *douar*, a group of tents. In America and Algiers, cities and towns offered slaves opportunities, from hiring out one’s labor to purchasing goods, but those in northwest Africa found their opportunities limited. They were often given more onerous, physical tasks while in villages and towns, and they might languish in towns near Mogador for a long time while awaiting redemption. Stuck in Passareet, a town five days from Santa Cruz, one English crew worked “all day in the sun,” and their backbreaking labor was not unusual. Africans told Riley that a Spanish crew built houses and toiled in the fields near Wadinoon. While in Wadinoon, Adams built walls, cut down shrubs, made fences, harvested tobacco, and plowed. This labor, he felt, was “extremely severe” compared to the “light” job of watching goats.²⁴

²³ Saugnier, *Voyages*, 37-38; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 63-64. Slaves in America appropriated their masters’ resources, and excused their “theft” by pointing out that they were underfed. Further, slaves saw themselves as taking what rightfully belonged to them rather than stealing. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 603, 331.

²⁴ All nineteen crewmembers from the English ship *Solicitor General* worked in Passareet. This ship was lost in August 1795 while on a slaving expedition from

Though Western slaves were more likely to work, and work hard, while in towns, not all did. Hector and William Black, English merchants and passengers on the *Surprise*, did not toil while in Wadinoon, for example. Meanwhile, two of the ship's sailors and the clerk moved and stored goods plundered from their wreck. The Blacks may not have labored because their masters expected a large ransom for them. In fact, a Spanish boy convinced the Blacks' master that they could "pay a large ransom." This might have been true. As agents of the House of James Black and Company of Glasgow, the Blacks commanded more funds than most sailors, and they could do so quickly. The *Surprise* wrecked December 28th, 1815. By May 23rd, 1816, the Blacks were informed that funds for their release were lodged with Messrs. Renshaw and Company of London. On top of their ransom, they furnished their master with "presents" such as a "handsome fowling piece," sugar and tea. The funds they mustered for their ransom far surpassed what consuls were authorized to pay, a fact apparently not lost on their Africans.²⁵

Liverpool to Guinea. Africans showed Riley the register of the Spanish ship *Maria*, which had wrecked, he thought, in 1814. He was told that eight of the seventeen crew members worked nearby. James Matra to the Duke of Portland, Tangier, 18 November 1795, Public Record Office, General Correspondence before 1906, 1761-1906 Morocco, FO 52/11 CUST, 51; Riley, MSS, 70; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 66, 74-75.

²⁵ A Spanish boy enslaved five years earlier (when taken from a Canary fishing boat) served as translator. Hector believed he purposefully mistranslated. The English agreed to pay \$5000 for the ransom of these seventeen men; ransoms ranged from one hundred to four hundred a man. *Narrative of the Shipwreck "Surprise" of Glasgow, John William Ross, Master, On the Coast of Barbary, on the 28th of December 1815 and the Subsequent Captivity of the Passengers and Crew by the Arabs until Ransomed by the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers* (London: Printed by the order of the court for the use of the livery of the company, by Gye and Balne, 1817), 17, 28, 30, 40, 43, 52.

Perceived rank or promises of payment and gift did not guarantee freedom from toil, however. Captains Riley and Paddock promised high redemption fees and gifts, yet both labored while enslaved, or were ordered to do so, at least. Paddock and his men were commanded to harvest grain, but refused. Riley cared for his master's animals and fire as they traveled. He was, however, permitted to rest while awaiting ransom in a village near Wadinoon. Perhaps rank and access to money were not the only reasons the Blacks did no work. They may have benefited from a combination of factors including their ability to marshal cash. They were held with fifteen of the *Surprise*'s crew, all of whom worked, rendering the Blacks' labor superfluous.²⁶

Playing “the Quack”²⁷

Most enslaved Westerners performed either no or unskilled labor in northwest Africa. In America and Algiers, slaves doing skilled or specialized labor might receive various privileges, including cash rewards, housing upgrades, and the ability to work independently. Because of their specialized occupations and accompanying perks, skilled or elite slaves were separated from their fellows in North America and Algiers. In northwest Africa, few slaves did specialized work. Some were assigned unique tasks, but these rarely required expert knowledge or skills, and performing these tasks seldom meant special privileges for the Western slave doing them. Robbins, for example, protected his master's garden from produce thieves. Though this unusual job conferred

²⁶ Captain Ross and most of the crew were in the area around Wadinoon. A Spanish slave who interpreted for them was also in the area. *Narrative of Surprise*, 31, 28; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 149-154; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 207.

²⁷ Paddock, *Narrative of the Oswego*, 117-119.

responsibility, guarding the garden required little in terms of distinct knowledge or skills and Robbins was not rewarded in any way when he did this task.

Only one specialized position existed for Western slaves in northwest Africa, that of doctor. Some Western slaves assumed the position of doctor, but more were compelled to take on this role. Cochelet and the *Sophia*'s crew were thrust into this role though they did not claim any medical knowledge. Their masters insisted they treat cuts that the Africans had gotten from broken bottles. Africans surrounded the men, saying "tabib, tabib, doctor, doctor." Fortunately, their masters possessed as little, or less, medical knowledge than they did. The men prescribed lavender water for all ills, and when that was depleted, they turned to milk as a cure-all.²⁸

Africans expected Western crews to include a doctor, and they wished to make use of that person's medical skill. As soon as he and his men were enslaved, for instance, Paddock's master demanded to know which man was the ship's doctor. Finally, a previously-captured English boy explained that the captain functioned as surgeon if one was not aboard. Based on this, their African master marked Paddock as a medical man,

²⁸ Lavender water washed up from their wrecked ship. The Africans broke some bottles that washed up, and they cut themselves on the glass shards. When in Wadinoon, the crew prescribed milk for all who visited them. Apparently many did, as word spread they were doctors. Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 25-26, 63-64. Africans relied on butter and "the cautery iron," herbs, and supernatural treatments for ills. Some Africans believed "that all Christians had a supernatural mastery over the powers of nature," which might explain their willing consultation of Westerners' medical ministrations. Andrew J. Larner and Humphrey J. Fisher, "Dr. Gustav Nachtigal (1834-1885): A Contribution to the History of Medicine in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Africa," *Journal of Medical Biography* 8, no. 1 (2000), 45-46. Riley observed Africans applying the cautery iron. There were trained doctors in northwest Africa; generally Jewish, they lived primarily in trading locations like Mogador. In Mogador, Riley was treated by a Jewish doctor who had studied medicine in Moscow and traveled widely in Europe. Riley, MSS, 58, 98.

and promised “anything” Paddock asked of him if Paddock cured one of his wives. Paddock had little choice but to attempt a cure, and so consented to play “the quack.” His cures likely failed; at least, Paddock reported no rewards from this labor. Captain Riley similarly played the doctor for Africans who “consulted me where I came.” He, like Cochelet, noted no privileges or rewards for his medical services.²⁹

Only the *Surprise*’s cook, Black Jack, chose the role of doctor and, of all the Westerners pretending medical knowledge, only he reaped benefits from his practice. While awaiting redemption in a village near Wadinoon, he was permitted to receive patients and to travel to patients, as well. An old Moor, who “spoke a little broken English,” interpreted for him, and helped convince the Africans that Black Jack cured with the aid of supernatural forces. Black Jack spent little on his “practice” since he predominantly prescribed salt and water. He had only to pay his interpreter. For his “medical advice,” he received a goat, some fowl, and eggs. In fact, this work earned him “plenty of food” and some coins, some of which he shared with his crewmates. Far from envying his specialized role, his crewmates enjoyed the shared spoils and admired the “ingenious plan” that hoodwinked the “credulous fools” who came to be cured by their ship’s cook.³⁰

Black Jack was able to manipulate his doctor role due to particular circumstances. First, he chose the role rather than being coerced to fill it. His master kept him in a village for quite some time so his patients knew where to find him. That village was

²⁹ Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 191; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 117-119.

³⁰ *Narrative Surprise*, 36-39.

conveniently located near Wadinoon, which ensured traders and other travelers would get word of his practice and be able to deviate for a visit. Conversely, Cochelet, Paddock and Riley treated people rather than face their masters' wrath. In addition, they were traveling whereas Black Jack was stuck in one place while awaiting redemption negotiations.

Perhaps African conceptions about magic and healing aided Black Jack's medical practice. Like African and African American slaves in North America, Africans practiced and believed in folk healing and its close counterparts, conjuring and sorcery. While in Mogador, Robert Adams heard about powerful charms created by Africans. One African slave, Adams was told, effectively defied his Arab master due to a protective charm he made and wore. Adams further supposed that Africans used witchcraft to injure their enemies. He "stood peculiarly in awe" of an African in Mogador to whom he attributed great powers.³¹ Dupuis, Adams' editor, suggests that Adams picked up such beliefs while enslaved in northwest Africa. If so, Black Jack conformed to regional expectations of a healer as being black and supernaturally connected, and he used these beliefs to his benefit.³²

³¹ Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 107-108.

³² Some American masters believed their slaves used conjuring and folk healing to harm or help those around them. Owners particularly feared that their slaves used such knowledge to poison them or other whites. African-born conjurer Gullah Jack Prichard, a Charleston "doctor," may have played a role in the Denmark Vesey plot. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 612-615; Walter C. Rucker, "I Will Gather All Nations': Resistance, Culture, and Pan-African Collaboration in Denmark Vesey's South Carolina," *The Journal of Negro History* 86, no. 2 (Spring 2001), 135-136; Walter Rucker, "Conjure, Magic, and Power: The Influence of Afro-Atlantic Religious Practices on Slave

Africans gathered around for treatments recommended by Western slaves despite the fact that none of these Westerners possessed actual medical knowledge or training. In Western narratives, the implications are clear. Africans trusted Westerners with no training because they were ignorant. Africans were portrayed as not possessing even rudimentary scientific knowledge, and, therefore, unable to discern medical knowledge from superstition. These “doctor” stories proved the point, and permitted all rational, enlightened Westerners—white or black—to revel in their superiority to Africans who paid for salt, water, and supernatural treatments. On the other hand, presumably rational North American slave owners “ridiculed...Negro doctors,” but also “resorted to them” to treat their “own slaves.”³³

Black Jack’s crewmates interpreted his doctoring as “hoodwinking” their masters out of money and food, but they did not construe it as resistance to the system of slavery. Black Jack himself played the quack to improve his quality of life while trapped in a village awaiting redemption, rather than fight the system. He provided services to an

Resistance and Rebellion,” *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 1 (September 2001), 85-88, 94-95, 98; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 146-147.

³³ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 322-323, 612-615, 626-631. Weaver argued that slave healers were widely used by slaves and even poor whites in eighteenth-century Saint Domingue. Karol Kovalovich Weaver, “The Enslaved Healers of Eighteenth-Century Saint Domingue,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 76, no. 3 (2002). A self-trained barber permitted to self hire acted as “quack doctor” in nineteenth-century New Orleans; Martin speculated that he “treated” free and enslaved blacks rather than whites. Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 176. Nineteenth-century paternalistic ideology and self-interest drove some owners to provide better medical care—from white doctors rather than black healers—than most Southern whites had. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 114-115.

eager population and since his work kept him from running away or scheming revolt, his masters probably encouraged and appreciated his employment. If nothing else, his job fed him. Black Jack shared his spoils with his crewmates, which prevented resentment building against his greater access to food. Further, some of his crewmates manufactured buttons and other items that they exchanged for food and money, and they contributed their earnings to the group, as well.

“In Vain to Resist the Power of the Unfeeling Wretches”³⁴

Enslaved Westerners mounted no revolts against slavery in early nineteenth-century northwest Africa. They did not join forces with each other or with African slaves to foment revolution. Of course, barriers to rebellion or revolt were formidable. Westerners were spread out, held in small numbers, often ill fed, and unfamiliar with their surroundings. Because they depended on their masters for a desperately desired freedom, their masters had the upper hand in their negotiations. Like slaves in America, Western slaves engaged in small-scale resistance designed to improve their conditions within slavery. They agitated against particular owners or conditions, but did not fight the overall system of slavery in which they were ensnared.

The biggest incentive against rebellion was the very real likelihood of redemption. Westerners expected to be redeemed swiftly, and most were. To affect this, however, they depended on their masters to keep them alive and transport them to a European agent. Revolt would compromise this goal. Western slaves therefore focused their energies on negotiating redemption rather than resisting what would likely be a short

³⁴ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 82.

enslavement. They concentrated narrowly on themselves, their shipmates, and possibly—but not normally—the other Western slaves being redeemed rather than fighting the overall system of Western enslavement. Of course, overthrowing Western slavery was unlikely at best whereas negotiating their own release was within their reach.³⁵

Most African masters wished to redeem their Western slaves speedily. To work towards their common goal, masters and slaves negotiated “periodic conflict” with the intent of minimizing direct or violent confrontation and effecting redemption fast.³⁶

³⁵ In America, slave revolt and insurrection was limited because “under existing conditions, armed revolt was folly.” Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 156. Slaves in other locales used similar strategies of resistance to win concessions from their masters and improve their lives. See Bernard Moitt, “Slave Resistance in Guadeloupe and Martinique, 1791-1848,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 25, no. 1-2 (1991); David Barry Gaspar, “Working the System: Antigua Slaves and their Struggle to Live,” *Slavery and Abolition* 13, no. 3 (1992).

³⁶ Morris, “Articulation,” 1003. According to Genovese, day-to-day resistance “implied accommodation.” Robert Olwell agreed, noting that “slaves’ desire to secure greater autonomy *in the short term* often led them to negotiate within and therefore tacitly accept the patriarchal metaphor their masters preferred.” On the other hand, slaves’ small-scale resistance can be viewed as working a system in which they have very little leverage. Morris described how slaves might use that leverage to influence their circumstances. Kolchin acknowledged that self-hired slaves might be seen as accepting “their servitude,” but adds the important caveat: “except in the sense that they made the best of the circumstances in which they found themselves.” Berlin seemed to concur with Kolchin when describing the constantly evolving dance of accommodation and resistance between master and slave in which the master, who had the upper hand, sought to control the slave, but the slave acted to secure and protect himself. Limiting slave responses to accommodation and resistance left “little room” to depict “slave experience beyond the norm.” Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 598; Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1998), 197; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 74; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 2-3; Sharon Ann Holt, “Symbol, Memory, and Service: Resistance and Family Formation in Nineteenth-Century African America,” in Larry E. Hudson, Jr., (ed.), *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South* (Rochester:

Nevertheless, conflict did surface in their interactions. Western slaves resisted when the redemption process halted or when they were enslaved for a long period of time.

African masters were not averse to putting Western slaves to work while they owned them. Not surprisingly, labor was a contentious issue that involved negotiation and conflict between master and Western slave. Western slaves particularly resisted hard, physical labor. They disliked toiling for African masters and feared that excelling at any work might lead to permanent enslavement. However, they also resisted manual work because they were usually assigned such work when stationary, which meant they were not moving towards Mogador and freedom. They resisted anything that interfered with the redemption process.

Western slaves believed exhibiting any skills would cause their African masters to refuse to redeem them. They supposed that hard-working or skilled slaves would be worth more to their African masters. Riley, for instance, feared revealing any evidence of mechanical skills, thinking he and his men would have “been sold at high prices, and soon carried away beyond the possibility of redemption,” if they had such skills. Western slaves agreed that the “less useful a Christian makes himself when a slave...especially in a mechanical way, the less value they will set upon him.”³⁷

University of Rochester Press, 1994), 194-195; S. Max Edelson, “Affiliation without Affinity: Skilled Slaves in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina,” in Jack P. Greene, Rosemary Brana-Shute, Randy J. Sparks (eds.), *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina’s Plantation Society* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 247.

³⁷ Riley listed the “arts” Arabs especially valued as “carpenters, smiths, shoemakers.” Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 208; Riley, MSS, 70.

Although there is no evidence that African masters retained skilled slaves, Western slaves widely articulated this belief. Adams heard of a French slave, who, after twelve years, “turned Mohammedan,” called himself Absalom, married and settled down. Absalom lived in his former master’s house, but owned three slaves and “gained a good living by the manufacture of gunpowder.” Absalom may have converted and then exhibited his skill with powder; no one mentioned which he did first. He probably chose to convert and make a life for himself in Africa because he had given up on redemption. Enslaved at fourteen years old, he was over thirty when Cochelet learned about him in 1819.³⁸

Regardless of why or when Absalom decided to convert and settle in Africa, his story was an object lesson to other Westerners. His situation pointed out the insidious rewards of “turning Turk” if left in slavery too long. Such stories served to encourage consuls, government officials, and family members to redeem their countrymen and relatives as swiftly as possible, thus delivering them from Turkish temptations. Enslaved Westerners thought that this story indicated the danger of slave expertise, and accordingly, avoided displaying any skills lest they become life-long slaves or converts.³⁹

³⁸ Cochelet heard that “one of our countrymen,” who had wrecked when fourteen, “remained among the Moors, adopted their customs, and embraced their religion.” Cochelet wanted to visit the man, but did not. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 73; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 78-79. Skilled slaves in America were more likely than their counterparts to be freed or allowed to buy their freedom; however, converting and deciding to stay in America would not have meant automatic freedom as it did in north and northwest Africa. Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 81; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 213-214, 235-236.

³⁹ Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 73; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 78-79. Slaves in America practiced similar “silent sabotage,” and their “dissembling and shirking”

Periodic conflict erupted between master and slave when Western slaves tried to manipulate their circumstances. Western slaves had little leverage; their options were limited by their need to cooperate with their master. Still, they engaged in what has been called day-to-day resistance, or resistance meant not to overthrow the slave system, but to finesse the slave's situation. This type of resistance generally worked in the slave's favor while overt resistance usually elicited violent and unfavorable responses from their master. Because of the African environment and lack of work, Western slaves had fewer avenues of "day to day" resistance available to them than slaves in America. Their nomadic masters gave them little access to equipment to be sabotaged, for example, and mistreating camels might have meant death or severe punishment.⁴⁰

When faced with labor-intensive work, Western slaves favored dissembling to get out of the work. For example, Arabs put an adze in Riley's hands. Riley did not want to harvest grain, so he "cut at random," hoping they would think him incapable of this job. His men followed his lead to great effect, as they were "soon relieved from all further requisition."⁴¹ Paddock and his men also played dumb to avoid harvesting grain. Paddock ordered his men, some of whom could "handle a sickle as well as themselves,"

convinced American whites that "blacks were by nature lazy, foolish, and thieving." Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 157.

⁴⁰ In America, small-scale resistance was often used when the norms "as perceived or defined by the slaves, had been violated." Genovese, *Roll Jordan, Roll*, 598; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 157, 162-163; Edelson, "Affiliation without Affinity," 220-221; Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slavery*, 2-3.

⁴¹ Riley, MSS, 68-69. Slaves in America similarly managed to lessen their load from time to time. On Chesapeake plantations, "slow working, malingering, and shirking assumed extensive and ingenious forms." Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 191.

to pretend complete ignorance of this tool and its use. He even instructed one of his men to chop off his own finger “accidentally,” which Paddock thought would underscore their supposed incompetence. Even when Africans threatened to shoot them, Paddock flatly refused to harvest. His ploy paid off. Eventually they were chased from the fields and turned over to women in a nearby village. Here they parched and ground barley, and did other small tasks.⁴²

On the other hand, Paddock claimed that apathy, not playing dumb, got him and his men out of harvesting. According to Paddock, they despaired of redemption and were “reduced to mere skeletons, with fatigue of body and troubles of mind, all of which made life the less desirable for us.” However, they probably succeeded because of their owner’s absence. Their owner left them in this small village, possibly with the understanding that they would work. When the Americans refused to do so, their African guardians had little with which to threaten them. The Africans could not kill them without facing the owner’s wrath, a fact Paddock and his men understood. In fact, Paddock “thought there would be less danger of their threats being put into execution” because their master, Ahamed, was absent. Ahamed did not force them to work when he returned, either, probably because the grain-gathering was virtually done. Or perhaps he evaded direct confrontation with slaves who refused to work. They were very close to

⁴² Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 147-154.

redemption, at any rate, and open conflict served little purpose if his goal was the ransom money.⁴³

Though playing dumb did not always get Western slaves exactly what they wanted, it sometimes prompted changes in their condition. Robbins resisted any work that “might raise [his] value in” his master’s “estimation,” as “this would probably lengthen [his] slavery.” When told to reap barley, Robbins “shewed as much ignorance and obstinacy” as possible, but his master insisted that he work. Determined not to work, Robbins hid in a field, but his master found him and soundly beat him. At this point, Robbins acknowledged that “resistance was in vain,” and “submitted to perform easy tasks.” Robbins’ agitation indicated the limits of Westerners’ defiance. Their African masters had the upper hand, and Westerners had more to lose if they pushed things too far. Realizing this, Robbins acceded to his master’s orders when forced. He accepted “what could not be helped.” Like Cochelet, he discovered that “it was necessary to submit with resignation to the services which were required of us,” particularly given the “extremity to which we were reduced.”⁴⁴

Nevertheless, Robbins’ pretended ignorance won him a small concession: easier work. Robbins dissembled when he wished to negotiate what type and how much work

⁴³ Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 149-150. Riley’s master was also absent when Riley and his men refused to harvest. While their master was gone, visitors flocked to see the Americans. When they asked the Americans to perform tasks, the Americans pretended either that they had not understood or that they were incapable of doing what they were asked to do. Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 207.

⁴⁴ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 168; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 13.

he did. He evaded harvesting and fishing with this tried-and-true strategy. To dodge becoming a “slavish fisherman,” he affected “ignorance of every part of the duty imposed upon” him. He continued “shewing a good portion of obstinacy” until “the natives...found that the small benefit they derived from my labour cost more than it would fetch.” Obliging, his master re-assigned him to camel tending. Still, Robbins defied any attempt “to impose upon me any steady duty.”⁴⁵

Tired of Robbins’ defiance, this master sold him. Like other African masters, he got rid of Western slaves when they became too unruly or intractable. Fortunately for Robbins, he was purchased by a “trading Arab” who wanted to redeem him rather than extract his labor. Robbins failed to evade work completely, but he was given easier tasks, and, by encouraging his master to sell him, he moved one step closer to getting out of Africa.⁴⁶

While Western slaves won some concessions with dissembling, open defiance rarely elicited favorable results. Adams did not dissemble when he challenged a breach of customary rights. He refused to plow on the “Moorish Sabbath,” a day Western slaves typically had off. He raised the stakes considerably when he “knocked” his master “down with his fist.” If Adams wished to negotiate with his master, this was a tactical

⁴⁵ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 168; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 160.

⁴⁶ Mahomet Mearah took Robbins to a fishing village near Cape Mirik. He sold Robbins immediately after the much-fatigued Robbins dropped a water skin. Hamet, whose “uncommon goodness for an Arab” made Robbins “esteem him,” bought Robbins. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 158-160, 168, 173, 197, 202-203; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 13th ed., 155, 158-159.

error, one that not only further entrenched his master, but also involved other “Moors,” who rallied round his master. They beat Adams with sticks “in so violent a manner that the blood came out of his mouth” and two of his teeth were knocked out. They thrashed him until the sheik’s son “reproached them for their cruelty,” and for making Adams work on the Sabbath.⁴⁷

Despite the reproach, Adams’ master insisted Adams kiss his hand and obey him. Until he complied, Adams was put in irons, fed little, and told he would never see a Christian country. These measures did little to encourage an attitude of submission in the recalcitrant Adams. For three weeks, master and slave were locked in a stalemate. Seeing that Adams was reduced to “a skeleton,” some Moors advised his master to sell him rather than accept a “total loss” when he died. Fortunately for Adams, the English consul opened discussions about his redemption at about this time.⁴⁸

Captains Riley and Paddock obtained better results with dissemblance than did Robbins and Adams. After playing dumb, Riley and Paddock were removed from work details while Adams and Robbins were given a different job or sold, but rarely without deprivation or violence. In part, this difference was because Robbins and Adams were

⁴⁷ Slaves in America similarly fought back when asked to work during time customarily labor-free. See Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 185, 195; Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan, Roll*, 598; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 157, 162-163; Edelson, “Affiliation without Affinity,” 220-221; Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slavery*, 2-3.

⁴⁸ Adams’ master’s son ordered him to work and beat him, but his master did not intervene. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 74-75, 78. According to Genovese, a “surprising number of slaves would not submit to the whip” in America. In America and northwest Africa, this was a high stakes form of resistance that often bought the slave a severe beating and even death. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 619; Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 6-7; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 159-160.

enslaved much longer than Paddock and Riley. Robbins served as a slave for about nineteen months and Adams almost four years while Paddock was only enslaved for ten months and Riley a mere three months. Robbins and Adams interacted with a wider variety of masters while enslaved, many of whom purchased them for their labor and not ransom money. Conversely, Riley and Paddock were swiftly purchased by Africans who intended to redeem them. Since they were traveling towards Mogador, they were less likely to be assigned hard labor than were Robbins and Adams, both stationary for longer periods of time. Those enslaved for longer periods resisted more frequently and stridently. They chafed at their long service to the “capricious whim of an Arab,” and responded by fighting back even when their actions elicited poor treatment.⁴⁹

Enslaved Westerners—even those enslaved for a long time—did not oppose every task or beating. They chose when and what to defy. They were willing to perform if the labor was not too taxing, gave them a measure of freedom, did not interfere with being redeemed, or if resistance would be harmful. Robbins, for instance, cooperated when appointed “El Rais, or Capt” of his master’s garden. This chore kept him some distance from his master and gave him some personal responsibility and authority. When he caught a “wandering Arab” stealing grapes, he used a “tone of authority” that was “instantly obeyed.” Robbins seemingly enjoyed giving orders to an Arab.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Adams was told that his crewmembers refused to work while in Wadinoon, and that they were “cruelly beaten” until they complied. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 74; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 163.

⁵⁰ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 205. As in America, individual slaves decided “whether, where, and how to resist.” Betty Wood, “Some Aspects of

Western slaves used different strategies to get results that they desired from their masters. Sometimes Western slaves played the hard-working, acquiescent slave, seeking to please their master. When Robbins' master stopped for the night, for instance, Robbins, "knowing the service" he would "be compelled to perform[,]...voluntarily set" himself about it. He "endeavored to conciliate" his master's "favor, by performing with apparent cheerfulness, all the irksome duties of a slave." Riley used this conciliatory strategy when sold to an old man "whose features showed every sign of the deepest rooted malignity." Riley "tried [his] very best" and was "extremely anxious to please him, if such a thing was possible." Unfortunately, the old man could not be pleased. He beat Riley given any excuse, including that Riley walked too slowly. Still, Riley continued trying to win his master's approval.⁵¹

Western slaves sometimes took pride in pleasing their masters. Their pride might have been related to their ability to perform well, even to represent their "race" in performing well, or simply that masters they pleased treated them better than those they did not. Robbins' master ordered him to shoot, and, after Robbins shot well, complimented Robbins and himself. He patted Robbins on the shoulder and "thought he had done well in purchasing me." Robbins simultaneously expressed satisfaction in

Female Resistance to Chattel Slavery in Low Country Georgia, 1767-1815," *The Historical Journal* 30, no. 3 (September 1987), 61.

⁵¹ Riley further described this old man as "nearly as black as a negro, one of the most ill-looking and disgusting I had yet seen." Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 82-83; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 87-88.

performing well for his master and poked fun at both his master's pride in his slave and his own gratification when praised by his master.⁵²

Western slaves also used theft as a way of negotiating the conditions of their enslavement without openly confronting their masters. Few Western slaves had an opportunity to steal from their masters, but if they could, they did. After they were released from harvesting and sent to live with the women, Paddock and his men appropriated resources from their jailers. Hoping to be treated well, they acted agreeably to their overseers. Meanwhile, they appointed one of their number to "pilfer a little" barley while the rest dutifully parched and ground grain. They stowed the grain, and then ate it in their room between their scanty meals. Thievery might have been easier with several comrades who could work together. Some of Paddock's men kept watch, one picked a lock, a couple kept working, and a few filched barley. Robbins stole when bolstered by Williams' presence. Together, they "thought it no great crime to steal a little" water from a goat skin. They were, after all, "nearly choked" with thirst.⁵³

Paddock stole more frivolous property and did so alone almost as if he could not help himself. Uncomfortable with his misconduct, he used "we" when describing his theft; however, he was solely responsible. Paddock's master appointed him tobacco

⁵² Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 184-187.

⁵³ Riley, MSS, 154-160; Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 157-158; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 197. Genovese categorized stealing as day-to-day resistance similar to dissembling, and described the pervasiveness of slave theft in America. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 598-599. Americans perceived blacks as inherently prone to theft. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 599; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 157.

carrier and server, and Paddock used this position to skim tobacco off the bag's top. He persisted even after his master, aware of his transgressions, threatened Paddock with physical punishment. Paddock believed this "trifling story" proved the "marvellous [*sic*] power of habit over appetites." He had to have "this poisonous weed" due to an "intolerable craving" that made him "ready to obtain it at every risk."

Paddock's theft indicated more than his addiction to tobacco. Paddock was a crafty thief. He hid in a wheat field when swiping tobacco. He carefully replaced the sticks his master placed at the bag's mouth to detect his embezzlement. He did so with enough precision that his later thefts apparently went undetected. His tobacco pinching showed his determination and craftiness in obtaining a commodity that he had access to as a free man, but that his master controlled now.⁵⁴

Other masters did not turn their belongings over to their Western slaves, and this made it hard to steal from them. Masters on the move may have had nothing to take, especially in terms of food or drink, and traveling masters tightly controlled what little they had. In fact, Western slaves more often foraged and shared what they gathered with their masters than stole from them. The brutal environmental conditions dictated mutual assistance, at least when they had the greatest need.

⁵⁴ Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 140, 167-170. American slaves also had a penchant for tobacco. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 644.

“Made up his Mind either to obtain His Liberty or Death”⁵⁵

While American “slaveholders confronted a serious runaway problem,” Western slaves attempted escape infrequently.⁵⁶ Because Western slaves expected redemption, they had little reason to flee, and they had little reason to expect success in flight. They contended with a grueling terrain and climate, and usually did not know their exact location, let alone the direction or distance to Mogador. Paddock’s master was “careful to keep” his Western slaves “ignorant of the geography of their country.” However, there were exceptional circumstances in which slaves tried to run away—either permanently or temporarily.⁵⁷

To escape slavery, Western slaves need to reach Mogador, or possibly Santa Cruz (Agadir). The routes to these towns were comparatively well traveled and settled, making re-enslavement probable. In addition, Western slaves had no way to store provisions for such a journey and knew little about living off this land. As Robbins pointed out, there was nowhere to run to and no way to avoid starvation. For these

⁵⁵ Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 66.

⁵⁶ Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 653, 649; Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 234-235, 241. Slaves in Africa and the Middle East frequently ran away. Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989), 63. For frequency of escape in Morocco, see Mohammed Ennaji, translated by Seth Graebner, *Serving the Master: Slavery and Society in Nineteenth-Century Morocco* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 43-49.

⁵⁷ Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 125.

reasons, Westerners seldom attempted to escape as long as they had hopes of being redeemed.⁵⁸

Unlikely to escape slavery completely by running away, Western slaves, like many slaves in America, fled “short distances...for a short period of time with a...limited objective.”⁵⁹ Slaves in America ran short distances to avoid strenuous work, punishment, being moved or sold, or to visit a loved one. Western slaves in northwest Africa used flight for the same reasons, and, like slaves in America, utilized escape as a negotiating tool or bargaining chip. In Africa, Robbins fled when a master beat him for not finding fire fuel, but he did not run far, and even found a few sticks he could present to his master when he returned later that evening. In Hilla Gibla, Adams flew from a dangerously irate master who had discovered Adams in his wife’s tent—for a second time. Fortunately, Adams was aided by “friend,” Boerick, who hid him, purchased him in the ensuing uproar, and set out for Mogador with him the next day.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 139.

⁵⁹ Morgan described similar efforts particularly by slave craftsmen. Slaves on rice plantations tended to run away in June when hoeing—extremely repetitive and never-ending work—started. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 282; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 348-349, 351, 522, 526-528; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 649-650; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 158-159; Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, 195.

⁶⁰ Boerick, a trading Arab, hid Adams in hopes of profiting from him. He set out from Hilla Gibla with Adams, six men, and four camels, apparently to redeem Adams and do some trading on the way. Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 16-48; Edelson, “Affiliation without Affinity,” 245; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 177; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 66-69. Jack may have wanted to change one aspect of his enslavement. He spent at least one night in his master’s tent. The next morning Paddock noticed that Ahamed’s mood was considerably improved, and he believed that Jack had done “*what decency forbids me to mention*.” Jack may have been fleeing sexual services that Ahamed required of him. After he disappeared, a search

Westerners desperately attempted to escape if enslaved for a long time or if their master refused to redeem them. After two years of enslavement, John Hill seized a chance to flee to Santa Cruz, which was in the Emperor of Morocco's territory. Expecting to be freed, he turned himself in to the Governor of Santa Cruz. Instead of manumitting Hill, however, the Governor presented him to the Governor of Taraduarant. Though also located in the Emperor's territory, the Governor of Taraduarant sold Hill to a Jew. Hill's escape did not help him even though he had reached supposedly "free" territory.⁶¹

party discovered him among reapers in a town Jack's master and his group had just passed. Jack, saying he was too tired to travel, offered himself as a voluntary slave to the reapers, who obligingly hid him. Ahamed paid a small fee to regain his property. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 205-207, 166, 301-302. For American views interracial sex, see Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 399-404; Edward E. Baptist, "'Cuffy,' 'Fancy Maids,' and 'One-Eyed Men': Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States," in Walter Johnson, (ed.), *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 165-166, 182-183. Islamic law gave slave owners control of their slaves' sexuality, but male slaves were somewhat less likely to be used sexually. Murray, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 79-80; Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1998), 4; Madeline Zilfi, "Thoughts on Women and Slavery in the Ottoman Era and Historical Sources," in Amira El-Azhari Sonbol (ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies* (Syracuse: Syracuse Press, 2005), 132; Toledano, "Concept of Slavery," 134.

⁶¹ In 1805, Paddock met Hill in New York, and Hill told him this story. Consular records indicate that Hill may have escaped with a shipmate, Samuel Brown. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 332-332; James Simpson to Mohammed Ben Absalem Selwy, the Emperor's minister at Fez, Tangier, 3 September 1802, General Services Administration, Despatches from United States Consuls in Tangier, National Archives and Records Administration Services, College Park, Maryland; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 2 September 1802, Despatches, NARA. Just as slaves absconded for various and personal reasons, masters dealt with runaways differently. Smaller planters tried to "reform their slaves' behavior before punishing them severely or selling them or their children." Some masters sold slaves at reduced prices to be rid of repeat-escapees. Franklin and Schweninger, 242-243, 245. In America, some slaves "ran to other white people," but

Like Hill, other Western runaways traded masters, but did not win freedom with flight. In Wadinoon, Robbins met a Spaniard who, after seven years of slavery, stole a camel and ran into the desert. For thirty days, he had no water though he managed to kill a fox to eat before a different tribe captured him. His new master refused to return him to his old master or pay for him. From his former master's point of view, this was disastrous. It was a failure from the Spaniard's point of view, as well. He remained in slavery for years after this attempt, and was still enslaved when Robbins was freed.⁶²

When Adams' master declared he would not go to Mogador, the despairing Adams first resisted work. A sound beating did not persuade him to labor; instead, he stole a camel and headed out of town, hoping he was heading towards Wadinoon. His master overtook him the very next day, but not before Adams reached the small town of Hilla Gibla, where he told his story to the town's seemingly empathetic governor. Adams' master claimed him, and promised to take him to Mogador after all. Having heard such promises before, Adams rejected the offer. Weary of African enslavement, Adams "had made up his mind to obtain his liberty or die."

Fortunately for Adams, the Governor knew a money-making deal when he saw one, and he had the power to hang onto Adams. He offered Adams' former master a bushel of dates and a camel for Adams, and Adams' former master was obliged to accept this offer or receive nothing at all. The Governor was not moved by an altruistic desire to

were especially likely to run to other slaveholders who they thought would intercede for them with their own master. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 655.

⁶² Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 139-140; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 13th ed., 139.

help Adams. He understood “the value of a Christian slave, as an object of ransom,” a fact about which Adams’ former master “seemed to be wholly ignorant.” Adams’ escape got him a new master, not freedom. Desperate to be freed, Adams gambled that if he fled, he would either stumble upon Wadinoon or Mogador on his own or that a new master, one who was acquainted with a Western slave’s worth, might escort him to freedom.⁶³

Initially, Adams’ escape seemed beneficial. However, this master did not move to redeem Adams. While awaiting redemption, Adams availed himself of his master’s wife after which he was forced to flee into the arms of yet another master, Boerick, the trading Arab. Boerick slowly wove his way toward Wadinoon. Weary of waiting for freedom, Adams fled again. A relieved Boerick discovered him the next morning. Boerick feared Adams “had been persuaded to leave...by some persons who wished to take him to Wadinoon for sale” and was “therefore greatly pleased to find him on foot, and alone.” Boerick did not fear that Adams would reach freedom on his own, but that another African might profit from Adams’ ransom. To ensure he made some money from this intransigent Western slave, he sold Adams in Wadinoon to a master who appeared to have no interest in redeeming him. Adams made it physically closer to Mogador, but his escapes had not gotten him out of slavery.⁶⁴

⁶³ Adams’ first master, Mahomet Laubed, told him they would not go to Mogador because a failed slave raid meant there were no black slaves with whom to replace Adams. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 63-65.

⁶⁴ Belcassam Abdallah owned Adams in Wadinoon. Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 68-71, 73. Like slaves in America, Westerners in northwest Africa were more likely to attempt escape when near a border area. For those in northwest Africa, this meant close

Like Adams, Benjamin Seavers repeatedly ran away because he had little hope of redemption. Seavers was trapped by American politics and trade regulations rather than slow-moving masters. Because Seavers navigated the American ship *Indefatigable* without proper paperwork, the United States was not obligated to redeem him or his crew. Seavers worried that he had few options for freedom outside of escape. Consul James Simpson acknowledged that their “situation” was “so distressing” that “they would be justified in laying hold of any means within their power for getting free.” Indeed, Captain Seavers tried anything and everything to get out of slavery.⁶⁵

Seavers first fled after he was beaten for striking an African. He was immediately recaptured, bastinadoed, and put in irons. He made a second attempt with a Spaniard, but a “Family of Arabs” detained them halfway between Wadinoon and Santa Cruz. After two escape attempts, Simpson figured that Seavers’ master was “a little provoked,” and

proximity to Mogador. African masters watched their slaves much more when close to Mogador, just as American masters observed their slaves closely or even locked them down when near free zones. Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 26-27; Sean Kelley, “‘Mexico in His Head’: Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810-1860,” *Journal of Southern History* 37, no. 3 (2004): 712, 715-717. Slaves in other locations behaved similarly. For example, see Yvonne J. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 39, no. 2 (May 1996): 152-153, 159.

⁶⁵ The Secretary of State to Simpson, Tangier, 7 May 1806; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 7 July 1806, 16 September 1806, Despatches; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 282. As in America, desperate slaves ran away more frequently than others, as did those labeled “obdurate” or “intractable” by slave owners. Some runaways in America, like Seavers and Adams in northwest Africa, “became so desperate that they cared nothing about the consequences of their actions.” Doing so might endanger their lives when masters responded violently. Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 38-39, 41; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 121; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 164.

in fact, his rebelliousness precipitated harsher treatment.⁶⁶ He complained that his “treatment among these wretches” had been the “most cruel possible to be conceived of,” but admitted it was “owing” to his “endeavours to make my escape from them.” By 1807, the flabbergasted Simpson found it “astonishing” that Seavers had “not Lost his Life” due to his repeated attempts. Every time Seavers was apprehended before he “could gain any part of the Emperour[']s dominion,” but he would not stay put. His master had, “in revenge,” demanded one thousand five hundred dollars for his redemption.⁶⁷

Since it was a risky strategy, Western slaves infrequently used escape as a tool of negotiation. For the most part, only slaves who had given up hope of redemption fled,

⁶⁶ Striking a “Moor” was the “most heinous Crime” that “any Christian” could commit. Seavers’ men “assure[d]” Simpson that Seavers had hit a Moor and then run away with a Spaniard. Interestingly, the African family that found Seavers did not claim him for their own, but returned him to his master. Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 22 August 1806, 28 Oct 1806, Despatches. Slaves resorting to repeated “bad behavior” met with harsh and violent reprisal from their owners in America, as well. Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 244. Though Western slaves in northwest Africa very occasionally assaulted a master, they did not seem to kill their masters or overseers as happened from time to time in America. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 616-617; Wood, “Some Aspects of Female Resistance,” 617; Robert H. Gudmestad, “Slave Resistance, Coffles, and the Debates over Slavery in the Nation’s Capital,” in Johnson, (ed.), *The Chattel Principle*, 81-82; William A. Link, “The Jordan Hatcher Case: Politics and ‘A Spirit of Insubordination’ in Antebellum Virginia,” *Journal of Southern History* 64, no. 4 (November 1998).

⁶⁷ Before trying to escape, Seavers pointed out, he had tried “every fair and liberal means to treat for my Liberty.” In June, Simpson heard that Seavers and Fenwick, the ship’s cook, had been redeemed by Seavers’ business acquaintances, including Renshaw, for \$1300. Their master insisted they go as a pair. Seavers to James Renshaw, Ajarar, 25 December 1806 enclosed in letter, Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 14 July 1806, Despatches; Simpson to the Secretary of State, Tangier, 6 March 1807, 3 June 1807, 14 July 1807, Despatches.

and they did so out of desperation. Slaves seldom reaped much benefit from escape. Seavers, who wanted freedom at any cost and tried to escape repeatedly, induced violence and harsh treatment from his master. Only long-enslaved Adams' flights paid off, but not all of his attempts helped him and none obtained his end goal: freedom.

“Made Me...Forget My Misery”⁶⁸

Like Western slaves in Algiers, those in northwest Africa hailed from countries with Christian traditions, shared maritime experience, and had quite a bit of autonomy while enslaved. Though they also represented different ethnicities, nationalities, ranks, and classes, they referred to one another as “fellow slaves” or “fellow sufferers,” thus stressing their shared condition of enslavement in a strange land. Those in northwest Africa were more solitary in this strange land. Not held in the claustrophobic atmosphere of bagnios, they yearned to see one another and wished they could “forge bonds of sympathy and cooperation” with fellow slaves. However, they found several barriers to maintaining bonds with fellow slaves.⁶⁹

Enslaved Westerners in northwest Africa clung to one another in the unfamiliar setting, and among unknown people, of Africa. They dreaded being separated, left alone with their Muslim, African masters, and often promised to stick closely together and aid each other. Before they were captured, the *Commerce*'s crew swore to stay close to one another so that they could “render each other every kind of office in our power.” Their

⁶⁸ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 88-90.

⁶⁹ The quote from Genovese referred to slave cooperation in the antebellum United States, but also described Western slaves' desire to do so in northwest Africa. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 623.

African masters, however, “unfeelingly” divided crews, so that each master owned one to three Westerners apiece. Westerners eloquently described the pain of being torn from their fellows. When his crewmates were led off, for example, Robbins lamented that he was “now left alone; no human creature to associate with; no bosom into which I could pour my own sorrow.”⁷⁰

Western slaves saw each other intermittently once divided among their captors. Their masters did not deliberately keep them from each other, and, when they were in close proximity, masters let slaves communicate freely with each other and without supervision. Because structural barriers like distance prevented slaves from making common cause, masters here, like those in Algiers, did not fear the growth of a slave community. Since no Western slaves revolted against their northwest African masters during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and escape from slavery was unlikely, Western slaves posed few dangers in small groups.⁷¹

⁷⁰ An old Arab owned Alexander Scott and Antonio, crewmates from the same English ship, and two other Arabs split the rest of the crew. Ganus could not sell Robbins at this point. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 51, 60, 63; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 59, 66; Cochelet, *Narrative of Sophia*, 24. African slaves forced to America were purchased by different owners, but “demonstrated a significant measure of camaraderie.” They “cooperated when they ran away,” for example, and “established and renewed ties with one another even when they lived on separate plantations.” Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 446-447, 448, 451; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 115.

⁷¹ Slaves in America rarely mounted large scale resistance because the “obstacles were huge.” In Virginia, for instance, “a vigilant and resident white population that was demographically dominant” was “well-organized in local militias and patrols,” and the “terrain...did not” lend itself to large groups of rebels hiding out. Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), xv.

Northwest African masters not only allowed their Western slaves to see each other if they were in close proximity, but also arranged such meetings. When camped nearby, Robbins and William Porter visited each other frequently. One of Robbins' masters brought Savage to their camp, and Robbins' mistress cooked rice and pork for the two men to eat while they talked.⁷² When visiting other Africans, owners ushered their Western slaves to see their fellows. When she visited their owners, for instance, Robbins' master's sister conducted him to see Williams and James Barrett. Hogan's master dropped in on Robbins' master with Hogan in tow. Robbins' first master, Ganus, walked five miles with Robbins to see the owner of Riley, Clark, and Thomas Burns. Masters facilitated Western slaves' meetings for their own reasons, which probably included keeping their slaves relatively happy while enslaved.⁷³

African masters had other self-serving aims when bringing slaves together. When Robbins' first master, Ganus, asked him if he wished to see Savage, Robbins was initially excited. Master and slave embarked on a day-long, five mile trip that ended in a gathering of people that looked to Robbins like a market for the "sale of the sons of sorrow." Indeed, after owning Robbins only eighteen days, Ganus had decided to sell him. Ganus ensured Robbins' cooperation on the long trip by telling him he would see a crewmate, not that he would be sold. Robbins dreaded the "risque of exchanging" Ganus

⁷² Robbins felt "a glow of gratitude" to his master and mistress for their generosity in letting him see his mate and feeding them. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 88-90.

⁷³ Robbins' master provided camel's meat for Hogan and Robbins. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 102 106-109,113; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 76, 102.

“for any other descendant of Ishmael that I had not yet seen,” and might have resisted the journey had he known what awaited him. Despite his impending sale, Robbins was overjoyed to see his “beloved shipmates,” Riley, Clark, Burns, and Savage. Unfortunately for Robbins, all these men had been purchased by a “trading Arab” who promised to take them to Mogador, and the Arab could not or would not purchase Robbins, a fact that caused the normally stoic sailor to “burst into tears.”⁷⁴

Most African masters were not threatened by Western slaves congregating or communicating with each other, but not all were permissive and helpful about letting slaves do so. Horace’s first master refused to let Riley interact with the boy. When Riley got to near Horace, this master chased him away with a stick. His behavior may have simply reflected individual proclivity, though perhaps this master hoped to convert the very young Horace to Islam and wished to shield him from Christians in the meanwhile.⁷⁵

One of Robbins’ masters cut his time with Savage short. Robbins spotted Savage while traveling, but Robbins’ master sped up to pass Savage and his group swiftly thus preventing the two slaves from communicating. This particular master may not have liked his slave commiserating with another, though there appeared to be no risk in letting

⁷⁴ Because watering places were usually “market[s] for slaves,” Robbins suspected something when told to go to the well with his owner’s family. Robbins acknowledged that “it was not for a slave to choose, wish or repine,” and therefore might not have rebelled. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 106-108; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of the Commerce*, 5th ed., 140. For self-serving reasons of their own, American masters with large holdings often tried to house their slaves near each other and tried to accommodate their slaves’ desires to maintain family and community. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 476; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 130; Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects*, 208-209; Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, 52-53.

⁷⁵ Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 86.

the men talk as they passed each other. They could hardly organize a rebellion since neither knew where they were headed or where they would be that night, let alone the next day. Both groups camped together that night and for the next several days. Robbins' master seemed unperturbed that Robbins and Savage spent those days in each other's company.⁷⁶

In rare instances, African masters split up Western slaves. When Alexander Scott's master "fell in" with the owner of Scott's crewmate, a Portuguese boy named Antonio, Alexander and Antonio attempted a joint escape. They were apprehended easily, but their masters wanted no repeats, so the boys were beaten and "immediately separated."⁷⁷ Of course, their separation may have been coincidental and related more to their masters' travel plans. Western slaves were unlikely to escape into the desert, though they might, as Adams had, run into the arms of another African master causing their original master to lose income. However, most escapees were re-captured within twenty-four hours, rendering Westerners' possible plots unthreatening.

If an African master owned several Western slaves, or if multiple masters traveled together, their slaves enjoyed regular company and the support of their fellows. While grateful to be together, they engaged in the kind of infighting normally found among people forced together in extreme circumstances. Paddocks' master owned several of his crew and four English boys. Though they cooperated to steal from their master or avoid work, they also clashed with one another. The boy Laura, who was "more of an Arab

⁷⁶ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 94-97.

⁷⁷ Traill and Lawson, "Account of Alexander Scott," 40.

than a Christian,” particularly caused contention among the Western slaves. The other slaves guarded what they said around him because they thought him a “little treacherous lying Rascal.” In addition, “since the Arabs take his part, he is very saucy.” Riley cared for the four crewmembers enslaved with him, but because they were “smarting under the lash, and suffering incredibly from their sores, fatigues, and privations [they] became as cross and as brutal as wild bears.”⁷⁸

If held alone, however, Western slaves attached great importance to crossing paths with any other Christian. Long-term slaves Adams and Robbins remarked both when they met fellows and when they saw no one. An aggrieved Robbins noted when he had not seen a shipmate “nor any other unfortunate slave” for a long time. Seeing a shipmate always “produced the most delightful feelings” in Robbins, but this was “mingled with the melancholy reflection that” each time “could be but short and probably would be the last” he caught sight of his fellows.⁷⁹

Western slaves collected information about their fellows’ whereabouts, documented each other’s condition, and found comfort in each other’s presence. Robbins noted that Williams was emaciated, blistered, and swollen the last time he saw him. He later learned from Barrett that a “very good man” purchased Williams and that he was in much better health. M. Lanspeze, the ship’s mate, “looked like a walking spectre” according to Saugnier, but his frail condition did not stop the two from tearfully

⁷⁸ One man cursed Riley even as Riley tried to aid him. Paddock, *Narrative of Oswego*, 107; Riley, MSS, 45.

⁷⁹ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 76, 93.

embracing. Westerners kept track of one another out of general concern for their fellows, and they also provided crucial information for consuls trying to locate and ransom those not brought to Mogador right away. Consul Willshire dispatched agents to the fishing village where Robbins had last seen Barrett and Williams in an attempt to locate and redeem them, for example.⁸⁰

Seeing a familiar face temporarily eased the reality of enslavement for many Westerners. When awakened by the “cheering accent” of Savage, Robbins “for a moment, forg[o]t” his “misery.” Likewise, Hector and William Black were consoled when they were “informed...that we were to travel in company.” In unfamiliar surroundings, Westerners were comforted by anything familiar, especially the presence of a countryman or any European who spoke a recognizable language. Hungry for the sight of a fellow Westerner, Adams even looked forward to meeting a Frenchman turned “Mohammedan” who lived near Wadinoon, though he was disappointed in this wish.⁸¹

Fellow Westerners reminded them that even if they were slaves at the moment, they were the more civilized people. Robbins pondered “why they [the Africans] were permitted to live at all, as they do nothing to add to the common stock of human

⁸⁰ Robbins heard stories of two Christians in the desert, one black and one white. He thought they were Antonio and Dick; unfortunately his information did not aid in getting these two out. Porter rejoiced when sold to a trading Arab not only because he would be ransomed, but also because he could fill the consul in on the whereabouts of the rest of the crew. Saugnier, *Voyages*, 44; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 88-90; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 13th ed., 161, 217; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 180.

⁸¹ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 96; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 73-74; *Narrative of Surprise*, 23.

enjoyment”; in fact, they only “diminished it.” When he and Porter met, they deemed themselves the “only beings present, that ever enjoyed the blessings and freedoms of civilization.” For Robbins, the “mild, and cheering accents of a friend” contrasted with the “hoarse and menacing voice of a barbarian” that he heard more regularly. In this context, even a handshake represented cultural superiority. When he met Barrett and Williams, Robbins took solace in “clasping and squeezing the hand of a friend whom I love.” Though the Africans laughed and sneered at them, Robbins preferred this “mode” of greeting “handed down to us from our brave Saxon ancestors.”⁸²

Fellow Western slaves recalled home and family, and consoled each other during their ordeal. For example, Williams regaled Robbins with family stories until “overwhelming grief forbade further utterance.” Savage and Robbins were less melancholy while emotionally supporting each other. They cursed the “inhuman wretches who” starved them and “bewailed their hard fate,” but “remembered they had a Father in heaven” to help them. They prayed together before searching for food.⁸³

Western slaves connected the ability to survive with a slave’s emotional state, so they commented on their fellows’ physical and emotional condition. They therefore encouraged those who had given up and were heartened by those who remained positive about getting out. For this reason, the desolate Robbins found it “double consolatory” to

⁸² In contrast to the American hand shake, Africans greeted each other “by placing the inside of their open hands together, then bringing it to the lips, touching them, and dropping the hands.” Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 70, 182; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 89, 96-97.

⁸³ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 96.

see Savage because Savage was “not wholly destitute of resolution.” However, he recalled “with anguish” his last “interview” with Williams, who had “lost his fortitude by his misery; and despaired of life.” Since disposition contributed to survival, Robbins worried about Williams. On the other hand, Porter sustained Robbins by pointing out that it was the “will of our Maker that we must suffer,” so they “ought to make the best we could of our situation.” Robbins “fully believe[d] that it was from this sentiment, that my own life was preserved.”⁸⁴

Western slaves helped each other in more physical or material ways if they could. They shared food and water with one another when in possession of those resources. Robbins, for example, passed around milk and water he was given not long after the crew was captured. While in Glimi, Saugnier “had food indeed in abundance,” so he shared a meal every day “either with a sailor of Provence...or with M Lanaspeze, our mate and son of the owner.” Riley split his food with Savage when their master refused to give Savage any. Further, Riley commanded the sick and exhausted Savage to rest while Riley gathered wood for the fire. Later, Riley grabbed an African with a scimitar poised to kill Savage, threw the man off Savage, and cradled Savage in his arms to prevent him from being harmed.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Williams did not make it out of Africa, or had not by the time Robbins’ *Journal* was published in 1817. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 95-96, 88-89; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 127.

⁸⁵ Like Saugnier and the men with him, Western slaves often interacted while in or near Wadinoon awaiting ransom. Adams and crewmates Stephen Dolbie, James Davison, and Thomas Williams, all held concurrently at Wadinoon, called on each other every “Moorish Sabbath” and market days. Dolbie, Davison, and Williams had been in Wadinoon twelve months when Adams arrived. Robbins spent time with Thomas Davis

Riley intervened to prevent Savage from severe beating several times, but no American was near Robbins to perform such a service. Having a fellow slave close by did not always help. Robbins could not stop Dick's master and mistress from beating him. Riley may have succeeded because his master, Hamet, was at odds with Savage's master, Hamet's brother Seid, and Riley played the two off of one another. Riley attributed his ability to protect his men, including Savage, to Hamet's respect for him.⁸⁶

Perhaps Hamet avoided conflict for other reasons. He may have feared angering all five of his Western slaves to the point they felt they had to fight back against the two Arabs. Hamet accommodated his slaves in order to control tensions until they could be redeemed. In addition, this group moved steadily towards Mogador and redemption. Masters and slaves had a vested interest in minimizing conflict, particularly violent conflict, as they got closer and closer to their mutual goal.

Western slaves helped each other and intervened for each other if they could; that is, if they were close enough or if such action was feasible. Their reliance on one another was stymied by their frequent distance from any Westerner, or, if near others, by what was practical. In the end, they wanted out of Africa—with or without their fellows. Since they did not compete for freedom or for food and water and since so little of the

of the *Romp*, a privateer that wrecked in May 1816. Seaman Davies told Robbins that the Captain drowned, and the five members of the crew were enslaved. Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 63; Saugnier, *Voyages*, 41; Riley, MSS, 50; Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 1851, 92; Adams, *Narrative of Robert Adams*, 73; Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 13th ed., 212.

⁸⁶ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 3rd ed., 119; Riley, MSS, 50, 52.

latter was available, they could afford to aid one another as much as possible towards this final and mutual goal.⁸⁷

Conclusion

African masters desired profit earned from selling Western slaves, not particularly profit derived from these slaves' labor. Although those slaves often worked, their work was not central to their masters' economic well being. Still, Robbins' first owner and his family, "all manifested a kind of pleasure in having a slave in the family, to serve them." Like other African owners, they enjoyed having a Western slave serve them, but their pleasure stemmed more from the fact that "they hoped to make a sum by the sale of me."⁸⁸ Robbins, like other Western slaves, shared their masters' desire for their redemption.

Because African masters had largely an economic interest in their Western slaves and Western slaves wanted freedom, each sought to minimize conflict. As in America, the master-slave relationship in northwest Africa was a "reciprocal, if unbalanced,

⁸⁷ Widespread dispersion and small holdings were the largest obstacles to building slave community in northwest Africa. In some American locales, slaves were dispersed and outnumbered, and could not maintain regular contact with each other, either. Jean Butenhoff Lee, "The Problem of Slave Community in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (July 1986): 348-349, 361; J. Elliott Russo, "'Fifty-Four Days Work of Two Negroes': Enslaved Labor in Colonial Somerset County, Maryland," *Agricultural History* 78, no. 4 (2004). For similar reason, organized resistance happened rarely in early Bermuda. Virginia Bernhard, "Bids for Freedom: Slave Resistance and Rebellion Plots in Bermuda, 1656-1761," *Slavery and Abolition* 17, no. 3 (1996).

⁸⁸ Robbins, *Journal of the Loss of Commerce*, 5th ed., 68.

structure that confined and channeled the behavior of slave and owner.”⁸⁹ Western slaves resisted while enslaved, but their resistance did not challenge the system of slavery itself. Rather, they used thievery, escape, and dissembling to avoid work or beatings or perhaps to motivate a master to redeem them or sell them to someone who would. If Westerners were redeemed, they were inclined to be well disposed to the masters who redeemed them or treated them well. Hamet wanted cash in exchange for Riley, and sustained Riley only as much as he had to in order to keep the man alive. From Riley’s point of view, he had been kept alive, regardless of why, and had been freed. He could, therefore, honestly leave Hamet with “feelings of regret, and shedding tears.”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Like American master-slave relationships, those in northwest Africa were marked by inequality and the goals and preferences of a particular owner and master. Morris’ description of American master-slave relationships can be applied to those relationships in northwest Africa. Morris, “Articulation,” 985, 987.

⁹⁰ Riley, *Loss of Commerce*, 352.

CONCLUSION

At 4 p.m. on the 13th of September, John Foss and about ninety Americans, to their “great joy and satisfaction,...lost sight of the Barbary shore.” They left behind years of slavery that Foss implored his countrymen not to forget.¹ Americans enslaved in northwest Africa left at various times, but most of them, like those in Algiers, did leave. Out of the one hundred and thirty men enslaved in Algiers, thirty-one died and ninety-nine left Algiers, meaning that 76% of enslaved Americans were redeemed. In northwest Africa, out of sixty-six shipwrecked men, forty-seven (71%) were redeemed, eight died (12%), and eleven (17%) were not heard from again. The vast majority of men in both locations did live to see home and country.²

¹ John Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss, Several Years a Prisoner at Algiers*, 2nd ed. (Newburyport: Published According to an Act of Congress, n.d.), 144. Foss’ sufferings did not end with his redemption. The high seas were still very dangerous. His journey home took seven months and involved at least nine stops by French, Spanish, and English privateers. His luck was not quite as bad as crewmate George Tilley’s. After three years of slavery in Algiers, Tilley was impressed by a British privateer. Had Tilley been recognized as English in Algiers, he would not have been enslaved. Foss, *A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings*, 147-159.

² These numbers and percentages are my calculations based on lists made by James L. Cathcart in Algiers, John Foss, and historians Richard B. Parker and Gary Edward Wilson. James L. Cathcart, “Americans Captured in 1793,” Extracts from my Journal, The Papers of James L. Cathcart, 1785-1817, Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Washington, D.C., 187; Foss, *A Journal of Captivity and Sufferings*, 160-161; Richard B. Parker, *Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 209-215; Gary Edward Wilson, “American Prisoners in the Barbary Nations, 1784-1816” (Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State University, 1979),

Western enslavement in Africa differed from other slaveries most drastically in terms of slaves' access to manumission. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most Western slaves would serve only temporarily in Africa, and this fact affected many aspects of their enslavement in both north and northwest Africa. Because their enslavement was short term, slaves concentrated on their own comfort rather than working cooperatively or communally with their fellow slaves. Individual striving of slaves was particularly evident in Algiers, where each slave purchased needed supplies as well as comforts such as private rooms until released. If near one another, desert-held slaves searched together for sustenance in a hostile environment. In both locations, short-term, serial slave ownership predisposed African masters to view their Western slaves primarily as commodities, and not as members of their family.

Their short-term enslavement appears entirely different from other slaveries, yet this and other seemingly odd characteristics of Western slavery in north and northwest Africa had counterparts in slaveries in other times and places. For example, other slaves had access to freedom; in fact, "manumission coexisted with perpetual bondage" in many slave systems.³ Most other slave systems granted fewer slaves freedom, but they did

320-322. Nearly one-sixth of Western slaves died every year in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and overall, they had only a fifty percent chance surviving enslavement. Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 172-173.

³ Stephen Whitman, "Diverse Good Causes: Manumission and the Transformation of Urban Slavery," *Social Science History* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 333.

allow it. In this and other aspects, African enslavement of Westerners differed only in degree and emphasis from other slave systems.

In the United States, some slaves purchased their own or others' freedom. A very few served as "term slaves," a practice prevalent in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Baltimore. Term slaves and their masters signed a deed of manumission that specified a number of years to be served after which they were free. Term slavery encouraged slaves to accept their condition just as the possibility of ransom in north and northwest Africa helped Western slaves endure slavery for a short duration. In Baltimore, escape attempts fell more than one half while term slavery proliferated, between 1790 and 1810.⁴ Further, owners recouped their expenditures by the time their slaves were manumitted.⁵

Some American slaves, often those who were self-hired or artisans, purchased their freedom. A "widespread urban phenomenon," self-hired slaves arranged their own living and labor conditions including their pay, all or part of which would be paid to their

⁴ Masters spent a third less on term slaves than on long-term slaves. Whitman, "Diverse Good Causes," 337. Between 1789 and 1814, about half of the 1,000 manumissions in Baltimore County involved term slavery. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 278.

⁵ Many historians have argued that self purchase, term slavery, and hiring out were all management techniques used to "ensure the good behavior" of slaves. Midori Takagi, *"Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction": Slavery in Richmond, Virginia, 1782-1865* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 38-39; Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 43-44, 47; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 235; Shawn Cole, "Capitalism and Freedom: Manumissions and the Slave Market in Louisiana, 1725-1820," *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 4 (December 2005): 1018.

owners. Like *papalunas* in Algiers, self-hired slaves sometimes had a “quasi free” status with better work conditions than plantation slaves. Such slaves escaped the constant eye of an overseer or owner, and might receive payment for extra work. On the other hand, many were “‘ordered’ to hire their own time by owners looking to increase earnings on their slave capital.” Self-hired slaves had “a very different kind of slave existence,” but not necessarily a better one.⁶ They might work harder and longer, doing more dangerous work, for pay that did not cover their room, board, and clothing, let alone their freedom.⁷

Slaves in other locales arranged or purchased their freedom, often through legally binding contracts witnessed and signed by notaries or other officials. In Spanish-held territory, slaves gained the right of self purchase, or *coartación*. Master and slave arranged a contract that set a price and the period over which it would be paid, usually

⁶ Self-purchase was not guaranteed or frequent, however, and usually required the aid of family and friends. Self-hired slaves usually had no contract indicating their right to self-purchase, and, in the absence of legal protections, their master could change their mind at any time. Over time, for instance, Moses Grandy paid his owner over six hundred dollars for his freedom, but his “owner tore up the receipts and sold” him rather than freeing him. Loren Schweninger, “The Underside of Slavery: The Internal Economy, Self-Hire, and Quasi-Freedom in Virginia, 1780-1865,” *Slavery and Abolition* 12, no. 2 (Sept. 1991): 10; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake* (Williamsburg and Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American Culture and History by the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 349, 351-352; Cole, “Capitalism and Freedom,” 1017; Ronald L. Lewis, “Industrial Slavery: Linking the Periphery and the Core,” in Joe Trotter (ed.), *African American Urban Experience: Perspectives from the Colonial Period to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 39-40. See also Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

⁷ Like term slavery, self-hire limited escape attempts by slaves. Schweninger, “The Underside of Slavery,” 12; Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004), 173-174.

three to five years.⁸ Redemption, or *rachat*, was permitted in the French Caribbean, though the number of slaves who did was “statistically small.”⁹

Islamic law encouraged the manumission of slaves, and suggested several ways to do so including self purchase. In the Ottoman Empire, masters and slaves might sign a *mükatebe*, or contract that allowed a slave to buy his freedom after a set period or completion of a “prearranged set of conditions.” Masters extended this option to slaves employed in the commercial sector, particularly in textile production.¹⁰ Slaves in Islamic West Africa bought their own and their kin’s freedom via the *murgu*. Self-purchase and ransom were so pervasive in West Africa, according to Paul E. Lovejoy, that enslaved

⁸ *Coartación*, like self-purchase and term slavery, was used as an incentive or a reward for “good” slaves. Not surprisingly, once the United States owned Louisiana, slaves were less able to purchase their freedom. Donald Ramos, “Community, Control, and Acculturation: A Case Study in Eighteenth Century Brazil,” *The Americas* 42, no. 4 (April 1985): 425-426, 430-431; Cole, “Capitalism and Freedom,” 1013-1014; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 332-333.

⁹ Bernard Moitt, “Slave Resistance in Guadeloupe and Martinique, 1791-1848,” *Journal of Caribbean History* [Barbados] 25, no. 1-2 (1991): 148.

¹⁰ Once signed, this contract protected the slave in a variety of ways. The slave could not be sold and had legal access to his own earnings. Muslim owners assigned some slaves to act as their delegates in trade, even long distance trade; these *ma’dhūn* slaves had a great deal of responsibility and independence. Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989), 39-41; Halil Inalcik, “Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire,” in Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, Bela K. Király, (eds.), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The Eastern European Pattern* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 27-30; Yvonne J. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums: Slaves in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39, no. 2 (May 1996): 140-142; Shaun E. Marmon, “Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire: A Preliminary Sketch,” in Shaun E. Marmon, (ed.), *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1999), 7, 13.

Muslims in Western Africa “could hope for, and often expect, to be ransomed” if their relatives knew where they were.¹¹

Few slaves could use these avenues to freedom in any of these societies, but, in general, American slaves had less access to freedom than slaves elsewhere. Few American slaves were self-hired, for instance, and few of those could and were allowed to purchase their freedom.¹² Similar limitations on manumission probably applied to other societies.¹³ Of course, most Westerners in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Africa were ransomed, but the fact that slaves in other slave systems could achieve freedom indicates one way in which this slavery differed only in emphasis from other slaveries.

Like other slaves, enslaved Americans expressed joy when freed. Regardless of how mildly they were treated or if they profited while enslaved, they were slaves, and like Foss, they eagerly anticipated freedom. Even the elite slave Cathcart crowed that when freed he “was once more on [his] own.” When redeemed, Captain James Riley underwent a three day delirium. When his “reason returned,” he discovered that for three

¹¹ Paul E. Lovejoy, “Muslim Freedom in the Atlantic World: Images of Manumission and Self-Redemption,” in Paul E. Lovejoy (ed.), *Slaves on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2004), 243-244, 246.

¹² Schweninger estimated that self-hired slaves were “no more than 1%” of the slave labor force in Virginia, or about 2,500 slaves. Schweninger, “Underside of Slavery,” 12-13. See also Cole, “Capitalism and Freedom,” 1024-1025, 1014.

¹³ Though often cited as an example of how slaves in Islamic societies had superior access to freedom, the *mūkatebe* has been little studied, and no studies indicated how often manumission occurred with this contract.

days he had been “continually bathed in tears,” shuddered at the “approach of any human being,” and “slunk into the darkest corner of my room.”¹⁴

As Riley’s three-day resurrection indicated, the experience of slavery altered the Americans who lived through it. Those enslaved in northwest Africa “lost reason and feeling,” had their “spirits broken, and their faculties sunk in a species of stupor.” Having suffered successive hardships, they were “habituated like the meanest Arabs of the Desert” and appeared “degraded even below the Negro slave.” When they arrived in Mogadore, they appeared “abject, servile, and brutified.”¹⁵

Strangely or sadly, only Riley changed his perception of and position on slavery due to his African enslavement. Other Americans were either unaffected in terms of their stance on slavery, or felt enslavement of Africans fitting for the barbarians they observed there. Cathcart hated the fact that his countrymen lived freely under the Constitution while he and other Americans languished in slavery, the only “victims of American Independence.” While white Americans wasted their best years as Algerian slaves, even “the Negroes” had a share in “your humane deliberations and have reaped the benefit arriving from your wise and wholesome laws and regulations.” Meanwhile, “we the very men who have assisted you in all your laudable enterprises and are cast off because we

¹⁴ James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce* (Hartford: S. Andrus and Son, 1817), 301.

¹⁵ They survived the “caprice and tyranny of their purchasers,” had no “protecting law to which they [could] appeal for alleviation or redress,” and this had destroyed “every spring of exertion or hope in their minds.” Robert Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, an American Sailor: who was wrecked on the western coast of Africa, in the year 1810* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1817), 130; [Jared Sparks], “Interiour of Africa,” *The American Review* (May 1817): 11-13.

have been unfortunate are denied the rights of our common country.” Were they “excluded without a cause from the privileges enjoy’d indiscriminately by the lowest class of our fellow citizens,” or would they be freed and restored to their rightful position in the Republic?¹⁶ In 1803, Cathcart seemingly pined for slaves when, as a freeman and American consul in Barbary, he wished himself on a Louisiana plantation, clear of this “damn’d Barbary business.”¹⁷

Robbins found it “singular that the negroes, although Africans like the Arabs, should be even by their own countrymen, although of a different tribe, be used with such barbarity.” He learned only that Africans “take delight in enslaving each other.” Therefore, it could hardly be expected that “an American, who has for months and years been enslaved by them, can feel so much compassion towards a slave *here* as those do, who have always enjoyed the blessings of humanity and liberty.”¹⁸

Captain Judah Paddock, whose narrative Riley published, reported abolitionist-style discourses with his Arab master. When Paddock’s master Ahamed could not or would not purchase the two black men from Paddock’s crew, he launched into a diatribe against “you Christian dogs” who “have taken” the black men “from Guinea country, a climate that suits them best.” Ahamed accused Paddock of returning for more “Guinea-

¹⁶ Cathcart, Extracts from My Journal, 142-143.

¹⁷ Cathcart to Captain Campbell, Leghorn, 27 June 1803, Box 2, Cathcart Family Papers, New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives, New York, New York.

¹⁸ Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising the Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut...* 3rd ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1818), 119; Archibald Robbins, *A Journal Comprising the Account of the Loss of the Brig Commerce of Hartford, Connecticut...* 5th ed. (Hartford: Silas Andrus, 1818), 90.

negroes,” an act that made Christians “worse than the Arabs, who enslaved you only when it is God’s will to send you to our coast.” In Ahamed’s view, Westerners were “too lazy to work yourselves in your fields,” which is why they consigned Africans in perpetual bondage. Paddock felt the sting from these accusations “in a manner that I can never forget.”¹⁹

Only Riley had a life-changing insight about slavery after being a slave himself. He thought it strange that “my proud spirited and free countrymen still hold a million of the human species in the cruel bonds of slavery; who are kept at hard labour and are smarting under the savage lash of inhuman mercenary drivers and in many instances enduring besides the miseries of hunger, thirst, imprisonment, cold, nakedness, even tortures.” Through adversity, he learned “to look with compassion on my enslaved and oppressed fellow creatures.” Though Africans held in America underwent a different form of slavery than he did, Riley recognized the universality of the experience. His “future life,” he declared, “shall be devoted to their cause.”²⁰

¹⁹ Paddock’s master accused Westerners of exchanging “useless trinkets” for “ship-loads” of slaves that were taken to the West “from which never one returns.” Judah Paddock, *Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Ship Oswego, on the Coast of South Barbary, and of the Sufferings of the Master and Crew While in Bondage Among the Arabs* (New York: Captain James Riley, 1818), 110, 171.

²⁰ Riley argued that African Americans should not “be emancipated all at once” as the loss would be too great for property owners. Further, immediate emancipation would “turn loose upon the face of a free and happy country a race of men incapable of” providing themselves “an honest and comfortable subsistence.” James Riley, “Riley’s Narrative: Manuscript.” [1817] New-York Historical Society, Special Collections, New York, New York, 159.

Riley saw what many of his compatriots as well as latter students of slavery did not: that in the working and living conditions, in the perceptions of enslavers towards the enslaved, and in the limited opportunities for release from enslavement, slavery in north and northwestern Africa differed little from the workings of slavery elsewhere in the contemporary world, including the United States. If African enslavement of Westerners was a “different kind of slavery,” it was a difference in degree, not kind.

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